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A Recent Look at University Libraries in Italy

ROBERT VOSPER

[Robert G. Vosper is University Librarian and Professor of Library Service at the University of California at Los Angeles. In 1960 he was a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Rome and it was during his stay in Italy that he was able to take a first hand look at Italian libraries. Since the subject of Italian libraries has been and is a much discussed topic among foreign scholars, Mr. Vosper's observations and impressions are both timely and appropriate. Mr. Vosper has published extensively in his field both in America and abroad. This article had previously appeared in *College and Research Libraries* (1961, Vol. 22) and is reprinted here because of its obvious interest to readers of the I.Q.]

Happily in recent years a thin line of contact between American and Italian libraries has been re-established. In the 1920's when William Werner Bishop and others had a generous hand in modernizing the catalogs of the Vatican Library, under Carnegie Corporation auspices, there was apparently a fair amount of communication, but pressing international events intervened. The story of the destruction of Italian libraries during the war and their subsequent reconstruction is a tragic one, and any review of the current Italian library scene must recall the pressing cost, in funds and in human effort, and the recency of that experience.[1]

Intensive American aid was, however, slow to appear on the scene; we were apparently far more prompt and generous in Japan and Germany. Once the major task of physical restoration was under way, Italian librarians felt an increasing interest in bringing their practice of librarianship into line with modern developments elsewhere; at this point, through United

States Information Service and Fulbright auspices, we began to offer assistance. In 1951/52, for example, Anne V. Marinelli was in Italy on a Fulbright research grant and, among other services, arranged fruitful seminars in Florence, Rome, and Naples. During the succeeding few years several Italian librarians were enabled to visit the United States. More recently Vernon Tate spent three months of the early spring of 1956 meeting with librarians at several points in Italy and helping select a group of eleven librarians who then spent four months of the summer and fall of 1956 in the United States pursuing a well-organized program of seminars and visits to libraries. Stanley West, who had met with this group in the United States, then went to Italy in the spring of 1957 as a Fulbright grantee and participated in a series of regional seminars arranged through USIS, as a follow-up on the 1956 American tour.

My special charge, as a Fulbright lecturer during the three months March through May 1960, was to seek some contact with the Italian university libraries. Of the group that came to the United States in 1956 only one was at the time a university librarian. There was, on the one hand, some thought that the recent experiences of American university libraries would be of interest to the Italians, and, on the other hand, it was quite clear that most of us in the United States have been quite ignorant of the present status of Italian university libraries. We know something of important developments in the several national libraries of Italy, especially the national central libraries of Florence and Rome. For example, in 1957 Florence began to publish in monthly fascicles the *Bibliografia Nazionale Italiana*, very much on the pattern of the *British National Bibliography*, and concurrently to issue printed cards. I am confident that many of us receive this efficient new national bibliography. Soon we will hear a good deal, I hope, about the plans for a new building for the National Central Library in Rome, to

replace the old building that was condemned and closed to public use a year or more ago. I had the special pleasure in Rome of seeing the detailed plans, selected in March 1960 after a national competition, and it is clear that this, the first major national library building to be built in modern times, will be a handsome, generously proportioned, receptive, and effective structure.[2]

But for me at least, as well as for most of the people I talked with in the United States, the university libraries of modern Italy have been an unknown quantity. Thus during my stay I read as much as I could lay hands on, talked with specialists at the Ministry of Public Instruction in Rome, and visited as many libraries as I could reach. Along the way, of course, I talked as best I could with students and professors, both Italian and American, about their experiences with Italian libraries.

During National Library Week I was able to participate in programs in Trieste and Padua, including special seminar sessions at the two university libraries. Subsequently during my stay three major regional conferences on university libraries were arranged in Milan, Naples, and Rome by the Ministry of Public Instruction (the Division for Higher Education and the Division for Academies and Libraries), by USIS-Italy, and by the Italian Library Association (AIB). At the Naples session, for example, librarians and professors came in from all of southern Italy and Sicily for a two-day session that involved visits to selected local libraries; my introductory talk on certain historical trends in American and British university libraries; a viewing of "Bibliodynamics,"[3] the rather good film on the MIT library; an illuminating series of speeches by Italian university professors and librarians; and a concluding discussion session presided over by Dr. Guerriera Guerrieri, the very able directress of the Neapolitan National Library. The lively Milan sessions were conducted by the wise and courtly President-General of AIB,

Dr. Aristide Calderini, emeritus professor of papyrology in Milan's Catholic University. The meetings in Rome were attended by ministerial officials and by an official representative of the Italian equivalent of the AAUP. In addition to visiting university libraries in the cities already mentioned, I was able also to have detailed tours of the universities of Modena, Bologna, Pavia, and Florence.

Eevrywhere it was clear that I had the special advantage of being on the scene at a significant time. The universities of Italy, like our own, are facing rising numbers of students and some demands for changes in traditional patterns. The prewar attendance figure for universities is quoted as 16.6 per 10,000 population; the current equivalent figure is 31.3. Particularly pressing is the relative increase in the number of students actually "in residence." At the same time, understandably, there is much strong criticism, by librarians and professors, of some deep-seated library problems in the universities, and this occurs in a general atmosphere of optimistic library development in Italy.

The Italian universities themselves have been described usefully in two fairly recent articles and one particularly illuminating pamphlet.[4] Briefly, there are twenty-four state (that is, national) universities responsible to the Ministry of Public Instruction for slightly over 50 per cent of their funds as well as considerable legalistic administrative control; three 'free' universities that receive no financial support from the Ministry but must be officially recognized by it; and several specialized institutions of higher education. I was concerned particularly with the state universities. They range in size from Macerata with but one faculty (in the European sense of the term) and less than five hundred students, to Rome with about thirty-five thousand fully enrolled students in an extremely complex and scattered institution. In age they range from a galaxy of the

world's earliest universities (Bologna, Padua, Modena, Parma, etc.) to Bari founded in 1924 and Trieste in 1938.

It is important to note, in considering their libraries, that administratively, at the local level, the Italian universities are centrifugal. To be sure, on a national basis through the Ministry, they have, as do the French, a far higher degree of uniformity and centralization than do American or British universities, but the individual Italian university has virtually no center. Physically the buildings tend to be scattered throughout the city, with no campus in the American sense. Rectors and deans generally rotate in office every three years and permanent administrative officers are at a minimum. These are common aspects of European universities. In Italy though there is the further fact that the individual institutes and faculties (e.g. the faculty of letters and philosophy, the faculty of mathematics and physical sciences) have great autonomous powers within the "loosely-knit" universities. Moreover, as one critic has observed, "There is no homogeneity within the individual faculties; faculty strength lies wholly in the individual professors, who often have little or no personal contact with their colleagues." Additionally, the professors, who are not numerous, often have little contact with their students beyond formal lectures, which are regularly mimeographed and distributed. One continually hears complaints from students, especially those who have studied abroad, about the disability this situation poses for them. Not infrequently the professor does not even live in the city where he teaches; for example I met a Messina University professor who lives in Naples. To top this all, professors move frequently from on university to another, so that there is, in the final analysis, little sense of loyalty to a particular institution. This is not to overlook the problems the professors face. Their numbers are small, although in recent years there have been increases in the statutory number of docents and assistants, and the learned

professor is tempted by many outside opportunities to amplify his income, and thus to slight his students and colleagues. Behind all this however is the medieval concept of the professor and the university which persists to a remarkable degree.

These factors, then, and others, build up to an uncommon degree of local decentralization, which perhaps explains why the concept of "the university library" as we know it hardly exists in Italy. In this regard it must also be recalled that the Italian student specializes rigidly throughout his career in a particular subject, often a very narrow one.

Within the Ministry of Public Instruction, the universities come under the Directorate-General of Higher Education. A coordinate office, the Directorate-General of Academies and Libraries, has supervision over thirty-three of Italy's greatest research libraries, called state public libraries.[5] This group includes the several national libraries; such eminent and ancient installations as the Marciana in Venice, the Medicea-Laurenziana in Florence, and the Casanatense in Rome; a few major specialized libraries, such as the state medical library in Rome (involved also is the pioneering Istituto di Patologia del Libro in Rome); and twelve state, or public, university libraries (Bologna, Cagliari, Catania, Genoa, Messina, Modena, Naples, Padua, Pavia, Pisa, Rome, and Sassari).

These twelve state, or public, university libraries are situated in university communities, often in university buildings, and in fact their major, but not their sole function is service to a university clientele. They have, however, no direct administrative connection with the universities, depending as they do from a different section of the ministry, and, except in an isolated case or two, they receive no regularly budgeted funds from the universities. As one shrewd Italian university librarian has pointed out, each of these libraries is carefully called a "university library" (biblioteca universitaria) rather

than "the library of the university" (biblioteca dell'università).[6] With very few exceptions, these twelve are the largest and best organized, and almost the only central, or general, university libraries in the country. Chronologically they are nothing so old as the related universities; most of them are mid-to-late eighteenth-century developments, and Padua claims that its central library, founded in 1629, is the oldest Italian university library. It should be noted that a few, notably in Sicily, appear to have earlier, rather confused, monastic antecedents. Rome and Naples, each claiming about 750,000 volumes, are the two giants. Bologna has 500,000; Cagliari and Padua about 400,000 each; Pavia and Pisa about 350,000; Genoa, 300,000; and each of the other four, 200,000 or less.

There are other libraries in the university communities, in fact a great many, but I will deal with them later, concentrating now on the twelve state university libraries. Because of their common administrative tie with the Directorate-General of Academies and Libraries, a most enlightened and forward-looking office in modern times, these libraries have not been isolated from the main stream of library development in Italy and elsewhere. They have been able to participate in a common effort, which they have shared with Italy's other national research libraries, that is the state public libraries. The lively Italian Library Association has provided another avenue for cooperative or coordinated activity. This is in marked contrast, it might be noted here, to the situation in almost all of the other libraries within the universities, where a cloistered tradition presses heavily. The twelve operate under uniform statutes which, among other things, assure that they serve generously a broader clientele than any of the libraries administered solely by the universities. This public service function may, in fact, explain the legislation which originally brought these libraries,

together with others, under national rather than local control. The senior staffing is handled centrally through the Directorate-General; the result is uniform salary scales and an open, competitive procedure for filling positions. Moreover, this permits the librarians to move not only from one university to another, but readily among the whole group of the country's thirty-three top research libraries, with fair assurance of rich and varied experience. On the other hand, one hears that this administrative pattern prevents the twelve libraries from being sensitive to the needs of the universities. This is an obvious criticism, but a hard-headed look at those libraries which universities do operate directly can produce only skepticism, except in a few isolated cases, that the universities could do anything like so well. What is true, as will become clear, is that the sharp separation of the twelve from the innumerable, generally specialized, libraries operated by the universities, together with the sullenly isolationist spirit prevailing among the latter group, is seriously hampering the full-scale development of Italy's research library program. This, specifically, is the central problem I was to investigate and which, happily, we were able finally to discuss publicly and pointedly in the three regional conferences.

Immediately after the war most Italian libraries faced the difficult task of reconstructing buildings as well as reconstructing collections, many of which were bombed and all of which became dormant. Now that the most critical of that work has been finished, the twelve university libraries have been able to put energy into new projects. Most striking is the work on cataloging. All of the twelve have been saddled with cumbersome, often imperfect, complicated, and varied cataloging patterns. Fixed location systems often survived well into an age when the growth of collections made them grossly anachronistic, and manuscript cards endured beyond the time when an elegant script could be expected of every

clerk, even into the age of Olivetti. Since 1956, however, a standard author entry code for cataloging has been available,[7] and there is now much interest in developing efficient subject catalogs. More recently the issuance of printed cards, for Italian books only it should be noted, by the National Central Library in Florence has had a heartening effect on libraries throughout the country, despite some complications that might well be expected in so young a system. These printed cards, as well as typed cards of the international standard size, have been widely adopted. Some libraries have been encouraged thereby to begin systematically recataloging older collections and dealing with uncataloged arrearages. Involved in this is the gradual development of a central national union catalog. Where appropriate, attention is being given to classification. The newly developed public reference collection at Modena has been classed in Dewey, and Padua is shifting from Brunet to Dewey. Many stack collections are shelved in order of accession, but this economical procedure is only logical because they are generally open only to library staff.

Everywhere libraries have finally come into the age of Olivetti, Fiat, and Necchi. Electric typewriters are a common sight, microfilm readers are on hand, libraries are experimenting with a variety of interesting procedures for the mechanical duplication of cards, particularly for non-Italian books. It should be made clear that these optimistic developments are not limited to the twelve state university libraries; most of the thirty-three state public libraries are involved, as well as a few other far-sighted institutions. It should also be recalled that the Italian libraries have a long tradition of producing scholarly printed catalogs of special collections, especially for early printed books and manuscripts. In this regard they have done a better job than most American libraries, and this important work continues alongside more modern developments.

In acquisitions work rigorous attention has been given to periodicals and to reference works and bibliographies. The problem of filling wartime gaps in journal files is an enduring one, and to this has been added the universal problem posed by the rapidly increasing number of scholarly journals. Increased intake of current periodicals is the most striking change in the post-war acquisitions pattern of the Italian university libraries. Between 1950 and 1958 reports, the list at Rome increased by one-third and Genoa's doubled. Among the thirty-three state public libraries the number of currently received periodicals titles rose from 20,000 in 1945 to 32,000 in 1948 and to 55,000 in 1957. This has posed serious problems for the university libraries because funds continue to be severely limited. Rome and Bologna, each receiving about 4,500 periodical titles currently, far outclass the others. According to latest information (1956 figures) Cagliari receives about 1,300, Padua and Pavia each 800, Genoa 700, and Naples 350.

Total annual book accessions figures are equally sparc. Current figures are difficult to secure, but the average annual intake of volumes (regular volumes plus pamphlets) during the decade 1945-55 would appear to be as follows: Rome 9,200; Cagliari 3,700; Genoa 3,500; Bologna 3,200; Padua 3,100; Pisa 2,100; and the others even less. I was told that the present annual average at Rome is about 10,000 volumes and at Pavia about 2,000, figures that are in line with the 1945-55 statistics.[8]

Several, if not all, of the twelve state university libraries receive by statutory deposit those books and journals published in their local province. Furthermore many of them are increasingly able to acquire materials through publications exchange. Thus it is obvious that acquisitions funds, which come directly from the ministry are very meager indeed. At Rome there are in addition some regularly budgeted funds from two of the university faculties (letters and philosophy, and law) because by

a wise and uncommon formal agreement the state university library, known as the "Alessandrina," became the official library for the two faculties and the repository for their accumulated books; this arrangement was made in 1935 when the university moved to University City where the Alessandrina is housed in the same central building with the two faculties. At Modena the state university library is wisely administered and housed in conjunction with the great Estense Library, wealthy in early printed books and manuscripts (as well as the extensive manuscripts of its great early eighteenth-century librarian, Lodovico Muratori), but the director has less than $ 3,000 in annual acquisitions funds from his two libraries. Occasionally, if the working relationships are adequate, as at Pavia, the university has assisted with special non-recurring grants to acquire essential library materials, but some university libraries have apparently never experienced such generosity. Ministerial budgets have indeed increased in recent years, but only slightly and apparentely not enough to offset rising costs and the postwar devaluation of Italian currency.[9]

In the face of this financial stringency the university librarians have perforce concentrated on collections of basic source material and reference works. Modena has opened a new public reference room, housing a well-developed and modern collection of over twelve thousand volumes on open shelves. The collection at Padua is equally impressive, scholarly and up-to-date. These reference rooms are a heartening sight because many American scholars have complained about their general lack, suggesting that it is difficult to complete research in Italian libraries once the basic source material has been located.

Clearly this appalling shortage of acquisitions funds is a primary problem, and it is so recognized by the library directors, by many enlightened professors, and by the ministerial officials in Rome. While I was there the

government was considering a major financial bill that would, among other benefits, provide generous special acquisitions grants to be spread over a ten-year period.

With financing of this sort it is obvious also that currently the Italian university libraries are not acquiring remarkable bookish riches; they are hardly keeping afloat on the tide of modern publishing. An occasional windfall does come along, as at Genoa where a special ministerial grant recently supported the purchase of a four-thousand-volume private library of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Italian culture, and as at Padua where an important eight-thousand-volume collection of early medicine was deposited by the university's Institute of Medical Pathology (Padua is one of the early homes of medical teaching), but these are rare cases. Moreover, their relative youth and poverty and the small size of the total collections will suggest what is true, that the Italian university libraries are in general not great repositories of bookish wealth; one looks elsewhere in Italy for extensive rare book collections. There are exceptions to be sure: Bologna has eminent and large accumulations of early manuscripts, incunabula, and sixteenth-century books, notably in the natural sciences because here is the private library of Aldrovandus; Modena has ready access to, as I have indicated, although it does not legally own, the incomparable Estense Library; Pavia is wealthy in complete runs of early European periodicals, and its original foundation collection, well cared for in a handsome special room, is strong in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century books.

Staffing presents another serious problem, although in view of the small number of books now being acquired and the fairly limited public service hours the situation is probably not critical for current operation. The shortage of staff does, however, prejudice any attempt to improve or extend public service functions. Again current figures are not readily available, but one analyst[10] has

cleverly publicized the fact that in all of the 33 state public libraries of Italy there are only 753 full-time staff members whereas in the French Bibliothèque Nationale alone there are 630 and in the British Museum Library 680. Figures for 1950 reported for Rome 52 staff members (19 men and 33 women), of whom 23 were professional, 22 clerical, and 7 volunteer (generally recent students seeking experience and hoping that positions may open up). In the same year Naples had 35, of whom 19 were professional, 15 clerical, and 1 volunteer; Bologna a total of 21, of whom 13 were professional and 8 clerical; Padua 19, of whom 11 were professional and 8 clerical; and Pavia 15, of whom 9 were professional and 6 clerical.

With such crippling limitations of staff and of books and journals, the university librarians have been trying to deal with increasing numbers of readers and at the same time to offer somewhat better services. During 1936 the 33 state public libraries reported 986,000 readers in seats; in 1948 this figure was 1,321,000; and in 1957 it had risen to 2,038,435. Much of the increase apparently resulted from the rising numbers of university students. According to figures reported in 1950 Rome's Alessandrina served 87,262 readers in seats; in 1958 the figure was 198,671. For Genoa the comparable figures were 25,410 and 79,833; for Bologna 35,536 and 108,775. The numbers of local loans rose in proportion. I can certainly testify to completely overcrowded reading rooms in libraries I visited during academic session and an acute disparity between the number of available seats and the students to be served. The situation at the Alessandrina in Rome is especially serious, with only 250 seats available, now that the National Central Library is closed; an average of 3,000 readers enter the building each day.

There has been little opportunity or money for increasing the size of buildings, although here and there an extra room or corridor has been somehow allocated

for readers, and there are apparently no major building programs in prospect for any of the twelve state university libraries. Available funds have necessarily gone into restoring war damage. Furthermore several of the libraries inhabit difficult buildings: Rome's Alessandrina is in the cold, monumental style of the Mussolini period and affords no opportunity for expansion unless the university undertakes a major revision of its site plans; Padua's building is reminiscent of a crowded and dowdy American Carnegie public library, although the remodelled reference room has a certain charm; both Bologna and Naples must struggle with dingy, rambling, palazzo-type structures, neither attractive nor efficient. The most appealing building that I saw, housing incidentally the best ordered and most vigorous of the older university libraries, is at Pavia where the library occupies a portion of the original university structure, soft yellow buildings forming a series of quadrangles surrounding quiet courtyards with arcaded walks.

I have indicated that the twelve libraries do not unduly restrict access to their collections. They give particular attention to students who may, with certain limitations, withdraw books for home use. The reference collections and displays of current journals are generally on open shelves in rooms accessible to students and outside users, as well as to professors. These simple opportunities, it will be noted, do not regularly prevail in other academic libraries. I have already mentioned the new public reference room at Modena, one of the handsomest I have seen anywhere, employing attractive modern Italian furniture, which like the Scandinavian is often far less staid and institutional than most American library furniture. Pavia has recently opened a comfortable and well-stocked ready-reference room intended especially for students, and the same library proudly displays a popular rental library which for a small annual fee provides current novels and travel books that the library could

not justify on its limited budget. This is a surprising and charming phenomenon in the traditional Italian academic atmosphere. Some, but not all, of the twelve have even abandoned the officious "bidello" (beadle) who traditionally sits at the door of Italian public buildings, like the "portiere" in an apartment building, to question your right to enter. Stack collections are generally closed to all readers.

By American standards the public service hours are sharply limited. The Alessandrina in Rome offers probably the most generous schedule, from 9 A.M. to 7 P.M. every day except Suday. Evening hours beyond 5 or 6 or 7 P.M. are quite unknown, as are Sunday hours. Several of the university libraries, particularly those in smaller towns, observe the traditional long lunch hour, closing from 12 to 2:30 P.M. or from 1 to 3 P.M. thus fitting into the rhythm of Italian life. But the lack of evening access, in a society accustomed to very late and lively evening activity, is unfortunate and only accentuates the overcrowding of reading rooms. The hours indicated are those for use of the reading rooms; the hours for loan service are much less generous, often two hours morning and afternoon. One understands of course the budgeting problem involved in longer hours. And at this point European libraries in general lack the advantage we have in the working university student, whose services often are essential to long schedules. Italian students, unlike the British are not well endowed with state scholarships, but many librarians expressed skepticism about trusting them with responsible tasks. This is the same attitude which, in many traditional Italian libraries, doubts that students, not to speak of the general public, can be trusted with any sort of open-access book collection. The lot of the Italian student, it might be noted, is not a rosy one.

In an earnest effort to increase service to their readers most of the twelve university libraries, which are centers

for inter-library loan activity, have recently entered on an attempt at local union catalog records so that they may know what periodicals and perhaps what books are available within the university precincts, but here they run head on against the crucial library problem of the universities.

As for the libraries financed and administered directly by the twenty-four state universities, the typical situation, both in the twelve that have access to a state university library and in those which do not, is that of a great variety of jealously autonomous, uncoordinated, and selfishly parochial faculty and institute libraries. The simplest facts about these libraries are almost impossible to secure, for most of them report no information to any national office and apparently to no one locally. At the University of Rome, for example, information on holdings was gathered, at great effort, from eighty-three libraries within the university for the *Union List of American Periodicals in Italy*, compiled by Olga Pinto (Rome: USIS, 1958), the most extensive listing I could find of these intra-university libraries. However I was informed by staff members of the Alessandrina that there are probably more than two hundred libraries within the University of Rome, although no one could be very specific. At our conference in Naples a professor of economic history, in preparing a vigorously critical paper,[11] had spent some weeks seeking facts about the finances, personnel, and collections of the libraries within his own university; the results were admittedly fragmentary but significant. Apparently there are over one hundred twenty libraries in the University of Naples, of which 66 reported to the *Union List of American Periodicals*. At the University of Bologna I was told by a rather harassed American visiting professor that after a year of searching out books and journals necessary for himself and his students, he was aware of 99 faculty and institute libraries; 48 had reported to the *Union List*.

Trieste with 2,500 students has about 50 libraries I was told locally. Since my information about the other universities is based on the *Union List of American Periodicals*, it is probable that my figures can be multiplied by two. In any event, the University of Cagliari with less than 3,000 students and 150 teachers (50 professors) has at least 23 libraries. Ferrara with four faculties and slightly over one thousand students has at least 15. Modena with 3,500 students has at least 30. Padua with 81 professors (420 teachers) and 11,000 students has at least 62. Siena with 1,500 students and eight faculties and advanced schools has at least 25. The University of Perugia with less than 3,000 students has 43 professors according to one source and forty-three libraries reporting to the *Union List of American Periodicals*. This Perugia situation. with its one-to-one ratio, whether precise or not, is at least neatly suggestive of the tendency, perhaps of a kind of ideal for many professors, including some American ones.

At the ancient University of Florence the Library of the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, founded in 1659, has well over a million and a quarter volumes, is thus the largest academic library in Italy, and is a very special institution in many ways. Three of four other specialized libraries at Florence have as many as 70,000 volumes, but the others are all smaller. At the University of Turin, also a medieval installation, three of the 30 or more libraries have about 50,000 volumes. Milan, a twentieth century university, has a quarter of a million volumes in the combined Library of the Faculties of Letters and Jurisprudence, but the others are in the 25,000 volume class or smaller. At Padua I was told that there are perhaps as many as a million volumes in the 60 or so specialized libraries. At Trieste, a very special case, there are perhaps 170,000 volumes in the specialized libraries. Elsewhere no one would even guess, but it is apparent in general that the institute and faculty libraries are

quite specialized and small, consisting of a very few thousand volumes.

Access and use in almost all cases is limited to the teachers in the particular institute or faculty and, on a kind of sufferance, their own students, who are seldom allowed to withdraw books. Outsiders, particularly students from another faculty, are not welcome. A point can perhaps be made from one visit I made to some of the law libraries at one great university. I was taken by a rather apologetic member of the local state university staff to see the libraries of the institutes of the history of law, comparative law, and Roman law. Along the way we passed several other law institute libraries, but I could not discover how many there were altogether. Each of the three I saw served only its own group, each had its own separate collection, generally small, generally incomplete, generally duplicative of the others. Each had its own manuscript card catalog of sorts, and none of the holdings were recorded in any kind of central catalog.

At the University of Rome I visited several of the institute libraries of its Faculty of Letters, all of them in a recent extension of the building which houses the Alessandrina, and all of them quite new; in each case all of the books were behind locked grill doors, available only on special request. This is not atypical of the situation in the libraries, central or specialized, large or small, new or old, that are operated by the universities themselves. Frequently all reference books in the main reading room and even current issues of periodicals are kept in locked cases so that a would-be reader must ask the attendant, often a formidable and uniformed functionary, to secure the dictionary, encyclopedia volume, or journal issue to be consulted. The libraries are generally operated by secretaries or teaching assistants as a part-time chore, or by low level clerks who have no training, little experience with libraries, and little interest in them. The catalogs and the state of the collections reflect this situation. Hours

of access are varied and tend to be meager, as from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. Books are seldom allowed out on loan, except to the privileged professors, and not even out on inter-library loan, although the responsible professors are not loath to borrow on inter-library loan for their own purposes. Book selection often reflects the special needs or vagaries of the senior professor, with no recognition of other libraries within the university, no matter how close by. There is no overall surveillance, not even any coordination or cooperation. What is more there is precious little machinery for securing any because of the very nature of the universities: there are few permanent officials, the senate is not a broadly representative forum as we know it, and professorial advisory or administrative committees seem quite unknown.

These strictures are not entirely my own; they reflect the opinions and experiences of almost all the Italian librarians whom I met as well as of a considerable number of Italian university professors, especially those who have worked abroad. The problem presented by these scattered, uncoordinated, and duplicative libraries in the universities — the impossibility of securing central information about their holdings and the consistent frustation involved in trying to use them — has reached almost a neurosis level in the minds of many Italian librarians. It rises immediately in any conversation about library matters. The librarians who are struggling to improve facilities and services in general are aware of the overall shortage of modern library resources in Italy and are aware of the advantages that have come in other countries through cooperative efforts and rationalized acquisitions programs. At Modena, Rome, Padua, and elsewhere, as I have indicated, the directors of the state university libraries have tried to develop so simple and useful a tool as a local union list of periodicals, and they have been thwarted by much inertia and disinterest as well as some outright suspicion and jealous opposition. Such information as

they have put together reveals extensive duplication of journals, not only between widely scattered university buildings, but commonly within one building. This is tragic of course, when total funds are so short and resources so limited. The Alessandrina two years ago embarked on a systematic venture of developing a union catalog of books in the institute libraries of law and letters. There are twenty-three such libraries in the same building as the Alessandrina which acts as the central library for the two faculties. Over seventy thousand cards have been accumulated already, but this is a slow and difficult task because of the state of the local catalogs.

In opening our conference in Milan Professor Calderini stated that he had discussed these problems before, but always as a *vox clamantis in deserto*. Professor Demarco's paper and others, as well as comments from the floor during discussion, made it evident that many professors have found their research and teaching crippled by the existing situation. The special virtue of our conference was the public airing of the point of view of these men, who may represent a minority but yet an able and now vocal one. They understand the historical and psychological factors behind the fractionated pattern; these institute libraries are a kind of symbol of the independent rights of the individual professor, part of his medieval inheritance. Yet it is also clear that this library pattern falls short of serving much of modern research. The sheer numbers of modern books and journals, and their cost, make it impossible for any of these libraries, except for a very few that have uncommon financing, to develop to a level of modern efficiency.[12] To be sure there are a few isolated exceptions, institute libraries well supported and run with imagination and efficiency. But even the wealthiest American university would be hard pressed to support effectively the number of libraries that many of the Italian universities are faced with, and the Italian universities are certainly far from wealthy. It was

pointed out in our discussions that much of the success that the Americans have had with academic libraries has come from our relative success in concentrating our resources of books, funds, and staff and our relative success at cooperative library efforts.

In those universities that lack a state university library there is occasionally, as at Palermo, a kind of embryonic library of the university (Biblioteca dell'università) but generally a very small and weak institution. Trieste, however, the youngest university of all, presents a very special exception, made possible no doubt by its very youth. Here the university's library is vigorous and modern. Although most of the books are in a large number of institute libraries, the central library by statute must maintain an inventory, which means a union catalog. There is still, to be sure, some tension between the center and the outlying libraries, but this is a step forward. In some other cases, notably Milan and Florence, the Library of the Faculty of Letters, serving as it does a numerous and bookish clientele, tends in a way to serve as a central library, but still without union catalogs and without any coordination with the other local libraries. In other cases there is no evidence of any sort of central library.

The Library of the Faculty of Letters at Florence, relatively wealthy in books and book funds, although not in staff, is another kind of exception because in very recent years it has been run with some recognition of modern needs. Since the great National Central Library nearby receives all Italian books by deposit, the Library of the Faculty of Letters spends almost all of its funds on foreign books and journals, one of the few planned and coordinated acquisitions programs that I came across, and a particularly significant one because whereas the need for foreign literature is very great in Italian research yet its cost, notably of American publications, is so oppressive that few libraries can afford to buy it. A recent rector supported this venture in Florence, for when the

new librarian began to issue a bulletin listing current acquisitions[13] the rector's introductory statement deplored the increasing fractionation of university life, the increasing separation into autonomous and isolated institutes, with a consequent loss, for both teachers and students, of any sense of being part of a greater organism. He hoped the library could help provide a sense of unity and center. He also and wisely hoped that the new bulletin would facilitate a coordinated acquisitions program within the university and even among the several libraries in the city of Florence. The future of Italian academic librarianship hinges on a wider acceptance of Rector Lamanna's spirit.

The Italian universities can observe one other forward-looking library pattern in their own midst. Milan's great Catholic University, a "free" or "private" university, founded as recently as 1920, operates its library rather on the pattern we know at Johns Hopkins. The institute or seminary libraries are mostly in the same building as the central library which is responsible for all of the university's books, with full catalog and loan records for the several institute libraries which are in turn manned by central library staff.

Thus the pictures is not entirely a gloomy one. There is an increasing interest in change, among an able group of enlightened librarians as well as an influential number of professors. The ministry is also concerned; in addition to the financial bill already mentioned, the government is considering legislation to establish, and require, professional positions for librarians in at least the largest faculty and institute libraries. There are also some excellent and successful examples to be observed on the Italian scene, as well as abroad. In this regard, the forceful and successful program recently developed at the Royal University Library of Oslo to coordinate the institute libraries is especially timely and pertinent, because that library, which functions also as the national library, has

a basic relationship to its university rather analogous to that of the twelve Italian state university libraries.[14] The problems in Italy, however, are so numerous and so ancient as to give pause to any brash American who would presume to be critical. He would surely end up, as I did, admiring the courage and the professional ability and idealism of his Italian colleagues. He might also end up increasingly proud of the universal scope of modern librarianship.

FOOTNOTES

1. Reported in detail in *La ricostruzione delle biblioteche italiane dopo la guerra 1940-45*, (Rome: Direzione Generale delle Accademie e Biblioteche, 1947-53, 2 vols.). See also: *Dieci anni di vita delle biblioteche italiane*, issued by the same body and covering the years 1945-1955. Volume I (1957) treats of "Le Biblioteche di Stato"; a second volume on non-state libraries is yet to appear.
2. A resumé of the several competing plans appeared in *L'Architettura* V (1960), nos. 10 and 11, whole nos. 52 and 53.
3. There is an urgent need for more recent, sophisticated films and slides on American libraries, especially college and university libraries, for display abroad.
4. H. K. Newburn. "The Organization and Administration of Universities in France, Italy, and Great Britan," *Educational Record*, XXXIV (1953), 245-274; R. C. Simonini, Jr. "The Universities of Italy," AAUP Bulletin, XL (1955), 563-592; Frederic C. Mosher, *The Administrative Science Program at Bologna* (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Administration, 1959).
5. Anne V. Marinelli, "The State Public Libraries of Italy," *Library Quarterly*, XXVI (1955), 163-170.
6. Silvano Gerevini, *Una delle più gloriose istituzioni pavesi, la biblioteca universitaria* (Pavia, 1959).
7. *Regole per la compilazione del catalogo alfabetico per autori nelle biblioteche italiane*, (Rome: Direzione Generale delle Accademie e Biblioteche, 1956).
8. There are useful statistics in *Dieci anni di vita delle biblioteche italiane*. Other useful sources are *Annuario statistico italiano* (the 1958 edition, giving 1956 figures,

is the latest I have seen), issued by the Istituto Centrale di Statistica, and the annual *Compendio statistico italiano*, issued by the same office; volume I of *Statistiche Culturali*, issued by the same office (Rome, 1954-57, 3 vols.), gives extensive 1950 data on libraries; *Annuario delle biblioteche italiane*, issued by the Direzione Generale delle Accademie e Biblioteche (2d ed., Rome, 1956-60, 3 vols).

9. See Gerevini, *op. cit.* The most recent financial information I have seen, presumably for 1959-60, indicates that the University of Padua Library had L. 2.950.000 (ca. $ 4800) for acquisitions, the University of Genoa Library L. 1,968,550 and the University of Bologna Library L. 1,400,000.
10. *Il Segnalibro* (Modena), IV, (1960), 2.
11. Domenico Demarco: "Le Biblioteche Universitarie Napoletane: Critiche e Proposte," *Studi economici* (Univ. di Napoli), XV (1960), 202-211. The Italian Library Association intends to publish the complete proceedings of our three conferences.
12. The only financial figures I could secure were those in Professor Demarco's paper which indicated that in 1957/58 the University of Naples spent about $ 125,000 on books and journals for its 120 or more faculty and institute libraries, far more than the local state university library had available. Such a sum if concentrated could produce one significant library, but much of it disappears into duplicative, uncoordinated buying.
13. Università degli Studi di Firenze. *Bollettino delle pubblicazioni acquistate dalla biblioteca delle facoltà di lettere e filosofia*, no. 1, Jan.-March, 1958.
14. H. Tveteras. "The University Library and the Institute Libraries, a System of Co-operation," *Libri*, IX (1959), 1-8.

From Insurrection to Intervention: the Italian Crisis of 1914

Richard A. Webster

[Professor Richard A. Webster of the University of California at Berkeley is already known to our readers. In this article he considers one of the most critical periods of Italian history: the years immediately preceding the First World War. Professor Webster analyzes with keen perception the basic reasons that determined Italy's participation in the First World War.]

Italy's entry into the First World War, however much it may have been triggered by diplomatic and military considerations, was primarily an effort to resolve certain internal political problems arising out of the breakdown of parliamentary liberalism, which had worked well enough during the first years of the twentieth century.

From 1901 to 1911 Italy enjoyed economic growth and partial social progress under the regime of Giolitti, who managed Parliament and the State administration in such a way as to disarm and dismember the Far Left. His favoring the organized workers of the North, not only through recognition of their right to strike, but also through allotment of public contracts to their cooperatives, had lowered revolutionary tension among them and strengthened the Reformists' hand within the Socialist Party. At the same time Giolitti had continued and even extended the worst abuses of previous governments in the South, where the alliance between State police power and local cliques assured a steady supply of loyal deputies in the Chamber: many of the victims of this system were disenfranchised by pauperism

or illiteracy. Thus the uneven development of Italy, the country's most distinctive problem, stood out more in 1911 than at the start of the century. But the existing system of shifting parliamentary coalition instead of clearly marked parties made this ecletic regime of reform and corruption workable, indeed almost necessary. All attempts to set on foot a revolutionary workers' movement (as by the Syndicalists at Parma in 1908) were thwarted by the Government's defense of public order, and by its informal but real understanding with the Reform wing of the Socialist party and unions. Giolitti's system was further entrenched behind protectionist legislation, which assured it the support of many conservative landlords, especially in the South, and of Northern industrialists, reasonably contented with an assured national market: this made the Giolitti regime almost immune to parliamentary attack by any democratic middle-class parties or groups, which remained small and divided, and it further accented the unevenness of Italian national development.*

This period of relative social peace ended in 1911. Italy was by then facing economic depression, her possibilities of growth in a heavily protected national economy had been nearly exhausted, and the government was confronted by new problems arising out of the rivalries

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*I would suggest that Italian protectionism, which lies at the root of so much of what was wrong with the country, seems to have been more than economic in its motivation. In this view, agricultural protection existed not so much in order to assure high profits for national agriculture, but rather in order to protect marginal or substandard agricultural producers whose status in Italian society was politically essential. In other words, agricultural protectionism shored up a rural social system which was in some ways anti-economic. Much the same motives, I suspect, explain pre-1914 protectionism in other parts of Europe. Industrial protectionism before 1914 was, at least in part, equally anti-economic, giving first place to considerations of military security.

of the great powers. Giolitti attempted to use his old methods of compromise in a bold new way. He based his new course on the support of the Monarchy and the conservative forces of the nation (especially the Catholics and the clerical Bank of Rome), by invading Libya, on which Italy had a long-standing diplomatic mortgage. On the wave of national feeling and appeals to the Italian people that would accompany that event, the Government would then introduce a bill for universal manhood suffrage (with some limitation on young illiterates), a decisive step toward political democracy. Thus Giolitti would have "brought the masses into the State" at the very moment in which the monarchical institutions and conservative forces of the country would have taken on new strength, a climactic example of his strategy of democratic reform within a conservative framework.

This time Giolitti miscalculated, by underestimating the cost and difficulties of the war and the dangerous energy of the forces he was trying to balance. His decade harbored a fundamental contradiction: he had coupled a partly progressive labor policy, and a sincere respect for liberal freedoms and institutions, with a notable subservience to the Dynasty in many things relating to military and foreign policy. The Libyan War laid bare this contradiction. Giolitti was unable to go on giving satisfaction to both Right and Left, for the war, by its unexpected costs, cut off the flow of government spending for public works, or reduced it, in exactly those areas where Socialist or Republican cooperatives depended on it. Nor did Giolitti's war satisfy the other extreme, since it merely whetted Italian imperialist appetites. The great compromise of the Giolitti era had fallen through, and the liberal state was forced, for the next decade, to face fire on two fronts at once.

Trouble began on the Left, but the parliamentary system finally caved in under attack from the Right. The Left fumbled with insurrection, only to have the

initiative snatched from it at the critical moment by Nationalists and nationalistically minded conservatives. What looked like a revolution in the making turned out to be an imperialist adventure, accompanied by repression on the home front. The *coup* of the Right came in a deceptive form, intervention in the World War, which easily took on democratic and republican colors: but the real nature of the Italian war of 1915 was best defined by Salandra himself as *sacro egoismo*. The Pact of London was the Right's great revenge, not only against the moderate reformism of Giolitti, but also against the treatened insurrection of the Left parties.

Of course there was a *direct* element of class conflict in Italy's prewar crisis, though it does not explain everything that happened. From 1901 to 1911 Giolitti had tried, with much success, to isolate labor conflicts and keep them on a purely economic plane, with the liberal constitutional state acting as an impartial protector of order, or, in some cases, an umpire. Hence the agitations and struggles of organized Italian labor usually went on within the framework of existing political institutions. But the swing toward a policy of war preparation and expansion soon changed matters. The Left's campaign against militarism, begun in 1911 and reaching a peak in 1914, appealed on the one hand to the economic interests of the Italian working classes: on the other, it called into question the fundamental institutions of the State, incarnated in the hated Army. Lines of economic conflict and lines of political cleavage ran together, with a dangerous clarity. Thus began the prewar crisis of the Italian liberal state.

The Liberals scraped through the universal suffrage elections of 1913 only by bidding covertly for Catholic support in more than 200 constituencies. Such were the effects of Giolitti's reform: in 1912 he had had to ask his prefects for personal information about the leaders of the Catholic Electoral Union, so little did he know them, and

the next year the Electoral Union had, in effect, saved his parliamentary group from being overwhelmed by the new Left vote. Italian Liberalism had lost its parliamentary supremacy. This meant that Giolitti's ministry now had to rest on a parliamentary majority ranging from Radicals to "Clericals," and his political position was shaken. He was probably relieved to quit in the Spring of 1914 and take one of his periodical vacations form power, little realizing that 1914 was to mark the end of his personal ascendancy and of his system in Italian politics.[1]

The best way of breaking down the complicated, shifting political situation of 1914 is to disregard, for the moment, certain traditional labels. There were two fundamental kinds of politics in Italy; the politics of parliamentary legality and the politics of elitist direct action and violence. During the crisis of the liberal state the one sort of politics comes to overshadow the other, to the point in which ministers who *formally* upheld the parliamentary system *in practise* made use of violent and illegal allied groups, or, to say the least, profited heavily from them. And just as political leaders of an older generation made a career in Parliament, passing from one group to another without much regard for programs or ideals, so certain political leaders of the new sort, once they espoused the career of political violence, passed from "Left" to "Right" without any sense of betrayal or inconsistency. Indeed, the cult of energy and violence had its effects even on elderly ministers with a lifetime of parliament behind them: they caught some of the prevailing fever and began to gamble with the World War.

Who was ready for violence against the Government in 1914? Most evidently, the Far Left; Revolutionary Republicans, intransigent or "young" Socialists, Sindicalist organizers and Anarchists, who all saw in the cause of antimilitarism a lever with which to pry loose the established order. The Left's subversive propaganda

campaign against the African enterprises and the Army would grow into a revolutionary movement, arousing the spontaneous but still dormant energies of the Italian working class.[2]

Here the Syndicalists of Parma and Milan were clearest in their purpose. They planned to use the antimilitary campaign as an entering wedge into areas of Italian organized labor that had rejected them before. Eventually, the Syndicalists thought, the rural proletarian masses of the Po valley would furnish the shock troops of the revolutionary general strike, flanked by militant railroad workers and a good part of the industrial workers of the North. At the crucial moment, when the Government would be face to face with the Syndicalist-organized workers, the State telephone, telegraph and postal staffs would join the General Strike, the soldiers, won over by antimilitary propaganda, would mutiny, and the whole bourgeois system would crash, overturned by an elite of proletarian leaders.[3]

The vaulting ambitions of the Syndicalist leadership were quite out of proportion to the movement's real scope and possibilities, but these men nevertheless constituted a serious threat to the existing order. Though antimilitarism was a most fortunate issue, giving to Syndicalists, Republicans, Socialist and Anarchists a common national ground, it was by no means the only vital concern of Italian organized labor. The years 1912-14 were bad for labor in general, and for agricultural workers in particular. In much of North Italy the collective-bargaining rights that had been won during the last decade were in danger: the agricultural labor supply far exceeded demand, and landlords were beginning to hire without going through labor-union offices and to dictate their own terms. This meant trouble: Reformist labor leaders had won out over Syndicalists during the Giolitti decade precisely because the economic situation made strikes for union hiring and collective bargaining,

once the State's benevolent neutrality was clear, both possible and effective. Now the depression of the Italian labor market made "economic" strikes impossible, and threatened to erase all the Reformist benefits. Syndicalist violence and the revolutionary General Strike could be put forth as the only strategy for organized labor. Hence the Syndicalists saw a chance, for the first and only time, to grasp the leadership of the Italian organized proletariat.[4]

They had to act fast, for time was working against them in the long run. The very existence of an agricultural proletariat, through much of the lower Po valley, was being undermined by combattive and highly organized landlords. During Giolitti's decade the agricultural proletariat had grown to unwonted importance largely because of land reclamation and development, now completed. By 1913 landlords were trying, with much success, to reduce hired or seasonal labor to a marginal function, or to eliminate it altogether, by settling whole families on their lands as sharecroppers or tenants. The new cultivators formed an "intermediate class," their direct interests and demands being often more in conflict with those of the proletarian organizations than with those of the landlords. Syndicalist leaders regarded the "intermediaries" as class enemies and left them to Catholic organizers. While Reformist unions called on the Government for more public works, as a means of easing matters, the Syndicalists urged a leap into revolutionary action. The whole Italian proletariat could be organized and readied, they reckoned, for a decisive blow in the Spring of 1915.

The Syndicalists could plan a national revolutionary movement, in spite of the fact that their mass base was only in the Po valley, because they had a controlling voice in the national railroad workers' union. This was the most embittered sector of Italian organized labor, in which the labor freedom of Giolitti's decade had meant little.

Railroad workers could never legally go on strike. Any Italian government, be it headed by a reformer like Giolitti or a conservative like Salandra, had to keep the trains moving, even at the cost of militarizing the rail lines and conscripting the workers: a railroad strike was not only directed against the State, but also hit the general public and paralysed the nation. On these hard lines it was impossible for a railroad labor union to enjoy the freedom of action and public sympathy that industrial or agricultural unions had made use of so effectively during the first years of the century. Railroad labor leaders had only a hard choice, between remonstrance and outright rebellion, the latter being the form that any rail strike had to take.[5]

In spite of its need for direct action, the railroad workers' union was at best an uncertain instrument of revolution. Since a rail strike was, in effect, a revolutionary act, the union had to take care, saving its energies and limited funds for the one great test. Its leadership was hesitant and rent with personal strife, as the Government well knew from its network of informers within the union itself. The "intermediary" and technical personnel, as well as the few Catholic railwaymen, had their own unions, with no disposition to go on strike. While in Puglia, the Marches and the Romagna-Emilia regions railwaymen were Syndicalist in orientation, the important centers of Milan and Turin were distrustful or lukewarm.

Yet, with all these drawbacks to a united nationwide movement, railway labor presented a definite threat to the State. Railway labor leaders had challenged the Government to raise wages and to eliminate various arbitrary and paternalistic systems of individual reward and punishment: not only the living standards, but also the human dignity of the worker were at stake. The Government had given no real satisfaction, and the situation was coming to a boil when Salandra succeeded

to Giolitti on 21 March 1914. When Salandra's Minister of the Treasury made it clear that no great improvements need be expected, that purse strings would be tightened, the railway union had a sharp and telling rejoinder: millions for Africa, millions more for the Army, and nothing for the workingman. The union did not even bother with Salandra's proposed investigating committee, which looked like another effort by the Government to drag things out. Direct action was the railmen's only recourse, though they had to take care, warned the union, lest the Government provoke them into showing their hand before everything was ready. There were excited meetings of railwaymen, with assurances of proletarian solidarity from postal and telegraph workers, seamen and the national Syndicalist federation. The Syndicalist leaders of Parma openly threatened that any rail strike might be reinforced by sabotage of the lines, against which no defense is ever completely effective.[6]

The threatened rising came in June 1914, without any detailed planning or coordination among the various self-appointed proletarian elite leaders. The Syndicalists *had* a target date in 1915, but their hand was forced. Together with the other parties of the Far Left, Syndicalists took every opportunity to agitate against the Army, and in this way their allies led them into premature action. The most surprising feature of the joint subversive antimilitarism campaign was the central role played by the Anarchists under the inspiring leadership of Errico Malatesta: the difficulties of Italian labor after 1911 had given them a new lease on political life. At a certain point in May 1914 the Anarchists simply took over anti-military agitation and, in accordance with their own simple ideas, ran it over the brink of insurrection. Just why this happened is not easy to ascertain, and certainly mass immaturity and desperation played their part: however, much was due to the leaders themselves. The Revolutionary Left had three truly charismatic figures:

Malatesta, unimpressive at first glance, but singleminded and utterly possessed by his faith; the Syndicalist Corridoni, a genuine proletarian, an ascetic and a missionary; and the Socialist editor Mussolini, already something of a trimmer, more realistic than the others, ready to use myths but not inclined to embrace them wholeheartedly himself. Haughty, isolated, perpetually out of money, Mussolini was the greatest journalist in Italian Socialist history, but there was in him nothing of the idealistic love of mankind that shone through the lifework of Corridoni and Malatesta.[7]

On the Italian scene there was no revolutionary realist of Lenin's sort. Alceste De Ambris, the Syndicalist organizer of Parma, and his comrades there perhaps showed some vague awareness of the need to organize revolutionary cadres, but De Ambris was too limited in talent and range to lead a national revolution: there was in hint far too much of the traditional Latin ideologue and man of letters, and he last appeared in Italian history as D'Annunzio's constituiton-writer.

The outstanding illusion in all these leaders, with the probable exception of Mussolini, was their over-simple notion of what it would take to overthrow the Italian regime of 1914. They were fascinated and allured by the essentially Bakuninist myth of the spontaneous rising of the people, from whose bosom revolutionary initiative and organization would come forth of themselves. They all held that a workers' legal parliamentary party dampened the fires of revolution, but they never prepared the necessary alternative, an advance-guard of trained professional revolutionaries, hierarchically organized and militarily disciplined. Everything was left to be improvised by the revolutionary masses: everything, that is. except the outbreak of violence itself.

On 9 May 1914 the Anarchists proposed a decisive trial of strength to their allies in the antimilitary campaign. Their plan was characteristically "open-ended."

On the first Sunday in June, a patriotic-monarchist holiday (*giorno dello Statuto*), the parties and unions of the Far Left would stage nationwide demonstrations for the release of Augusto Masetti, an Anarchist draftee of unbalanced mind who had tried to kill his commanding officer during the Libyan War: if, as foreseen, the Government should ban in advance such public meetings, the Far Left would go ahead anyway, answering any eventual police violence with an "intransigent" general strike, which the Anarchists thought would develop into a "decisive clash" with the forces of the Monarchy. The Syndicalists, Railwaymen's Union, Socialists and Republicans, perhaps not quite aware of what they were getting into, consented, and thereby threw down an open challenge to the new Salandra government. On Sunday 7 June it was still not at all clear to anyone whether the Far Left was aiming at mere protest, a theatrical seizure of Italy's public squares for an hour, or whether it intended armed rising: but some sort of storm was in the air.

The Government was already facing trouble in many parts of Italy, and almost daily at least one prefect would wire Rome for police or carabineer reinforcements. During May strikes had upset or paralyzed State tobacco factories at Lucca, Modena, Venice, Florence, and Palermo. At Genoa the prefect, faced the first week of June with a "subversively" organized firemen's strike, asked for army sappers. The Syndicalists were organizing dairy-farm workers in the previously untouched province of Pavia, assaulting "free laborers" (scabs, blacklegs) with typical Syndicalist energy, and the prefect was forced to send extra police troops. Sicily, too, was stirring; there were strikes in the sulphur mines, and in the ports of Catania and Agrigento, strikes which reformist deputies could not control. In Puglia the mass of agricultural workers threatened a general strike in protest *against unemployment* itself; an especially dangerous agitation,

since its leaders, De Ambris and Di Vittorio, had succeeded in giving a political turn to the general discontent of these rural proletarians, by telling them that their plight was due to the Government's refusal to provide public work projects. Thus the revolutionary leaders linked economic and political, antimilitary agitation in the workers' minds. This particular campaign undercut Salandra on his own home grounds. For the first time since Italian unification, a mainland Southerner was at the head of the central government, and he seemed fated to see the distressed workers of North, South and Sicily alike make common cause against him. Under the circumstances, it was natural enough for him to feel that Giolitti had left him a ship of state leaky and adrift. Probably this was the point at which began the historic resentment of Salandra toward the Piedmontese moderate, and Salandra's love of attributing his own government's troubles to a preceding decade of compromise with subversive forces. Certainly what followed June 7 was bound to put Salandra's back against the wall. He knew that the Far Left would seize upon the first Sunday of the month for antimilitary demonstrations of some sort. Salandra had forbidden public antimilitary meetings, but his officials warned him that private gatherings, which he could not forbid, might make uproar enough, if not handled quickly by superior force. The prefects of Ancona and Milan, the cities most threatened, were clamoring for police reinforcements, and the smaller centers of Emilia and Romagna were equally nervous over the approaching test. In addition, it was obvious from the movements of closely watched Anarchists that they were planning a coup of some scope, though police informers planted among them tended to exaggerate the effective force of the movement.[8]

The patriotic celebrations of Sunday morning went well throughout Italy. Trouble started in the afternoon, when a group of Far Left party members at Ancona, as they were leaving a private antimilitary rally, had a

bloody scuffle with the police. It came about as did many other disturbances in modern Italian history: demonstrators throwing sticks or stones irritated the police until one of them lost his nerve and began firing. Three civilians were killed.[9]

This was the signal for a widespread revolt of the Far Left. The general strike, already in effect in Ancona on the 8th, was extended the next day to the whole nation by the reformist labor Confederation and the Socialist Party, flanked by the Syndicalists and the Seamen's Union: even the reformists, for whom antimilitarism was in some cases a personal humanitarian conviction, implied that the strike would be without conditions or limits. The key point in Italian labor was now the Railwaymen's Union. With the rail system out of commission the general strike could really grip the country. The railwaymen naturally hesitated, for they had more than any other laborers to lose in the case of failure. But once assured that the other national unions were solidly on strike, they went ahead.

Meanwhile a wave of insurrection overspread Romagna and the Marches. Telegraph lines went down everywhere, and insurgents blocked rail lines even before news of the railwaymen's strike could be sent. The prefectures of Ravenna and Ancona were isolated from the rest of Italy, while the smaller centers were seized by improvised agitation committees. Only insurgent or requisitioned automobiles could circulate. In the general breakdown of communications all kinds of fantastic rumors spread, to the effect that the Republic had been proclaimed and that Victor Emmanuel had fled. The hated internal customs barriers were a favored target of mass violence. Some churches were invaded, and others burnt, and there were many instances of railway stations being seized and looted. The insurrection actually impeded the general strike, for the Railwaymen's Union national headquarters at Ancona found itself as isolated as the

beseiged police and prefects. Its telegrams were intercepted and stopped by the Government, while its emissaries were delayed by the insurrection. The national rail strike was consequently disjointed and late in starting.

Outside of the Adriatic provinces the rising failed to catch on, and the big cities were all spared prolonged violence. At Rome the police surrounded the Chamber of Labor, immobilizing the would-be leaders of the agitation, while the political centers of the capital were cordoned off. At Milan the police succeeded in controlling the crowd, armed with stones, that Mussolini and Corridoni tried to lead into Piazza Duomo, center of the city. The Socialist editor was knocked unconscious and the Syndicalist apostle clubbed and flung into jail. At Turin the factory workers went out in a powerful demonstration, before the Confederation's strike order reached them, but in three days of occasionally bloody street skirmishing they failed to penetrate into the center. At Florence, where a State tobacco workers' agitation was also going on, the police clashed with demonstrators, fired, and had to face a general proletarian rising, but there too succeeded in holding fast.

As the agitations died down in the big cities, it became clear that the Left had misfired. First the united labor front broke up, and then the regional insurrection, leaderless and planless, faded away. In the midst of Red Week, when the railwaymen were just getting their own strike under weigh, the big reformist Confederation pulled the rug from under the whole general strike. On the evening of the 10th, the Confederation ordered its constituent unions to go back to work the next day, after a stoppage of only some forty hours, without consulting the Socialist Party. The reformists had made their gesture of humanitarian and working-class solidarity, but they were having no part in the insurrection.

News of the Confederation's decision was sent at once by the prefect of Ancona to the Railwaymen's Union

headquarters there. The Union leaders at first thought it was a ruse of the government, and waited for two days before their own emissaries came back with confirmation and bad reports on the whole situation. Then, on the evening of the 12th, the Union ended its strike, in an atmosphere of deepest disappointment and alarm. At Milan things had gone very badly on the 10th: at a strike committee meeting in the editorial offices of Mussolini's *Avanti!* the Confederation secretary had led the railwaymen's representative to believe that the national strike would last at least until the 12th, but on the evening of that same day the Confederation suddenly quit. The Milanese railwaymen, ready to go on strike themselves, gave up when they heard this discouraging news. In vain their representative rushed over to Mussolini's office. Mussolini confirmed the news of the Confederation's decision, though offering the Socialist Party's help should the railwaymen strike anyway. This was not enough: the railway workers cancelled their walkout, while soldiers and police patrolled the station. The Union was defeated and discredited.[10]

Everywhere in the Italian railway network the strike movement ended in confusion and disappointment. In some places — notably Bologna and Florence — railwaymen broke with their own national committee at Ancona and voted to go on with the strike: since they were already subject to discharge, why not fight to a finish? Their strikes soon sputtered out, leaving a trail of recriminations against their own union and their fellow-workers who had not struck. At Rimini and Bologna the revolutionary Republican deputy Eugenio Chiesa persuaded some railwaymen to go back to work by promising to intervene on their behalf with the government. It was a disheartening end to the movement, for at the critical moment revolutionary leadership could offer nothing better than mediation, the old remedy of reformists.

With the end of the strikes, the government had ample means to deal with the insurrection in the Adriatic provinces. Ancona and Ravenna had been saved by the warships stationed there: at the end of the week troops were sent into the area. Subversive strongholds like Fabriano, reportedly a republic on June 12th, were back in the kingdom by the 13th or 14th. The prefects reported that the Romagnole country masses were still restless and rumbling, but utterly disgusted with their leaders. The government met with no resistance.

In fact, Red Week turned out to be a rallying-point for Italian middle-class Nationalists, who ably exploited the failure of the Left.

Repeatedly, the police reported the same public reaction. Everywhere middle-class citizens were outraged, for the risings of Red Week were fiercely, even rancorously, proletarian. Nice shops were forcibly shut down or sacked, respectably dressed people stopped and harassed, automobiles seized by subversive "hoodlums." Therefore the urban bourgeoisie cheered and urged on the police in their works of suppression, and many young students, fervent Nationalists, seemed itching to fight the Reds. Red demonstrations were met by belligerent Nationalist counter-demonstrations, much to the satisfaction of some police officials. But the police did not stop at mere satisfaction. At Rome a police plainclothesman went up to an antimilitary demonstrator on 7 June, heard the man identify himself as a deputy ,and then gave him two resounding slaps across the face to "take back to Parliament," as the minion of the law put it. The Nationalists of Rome took up a collection in the cafes for the heroic agent. Later during Red Week another Socialist deputy was jeered at and pursued by a mob of well-dressed but foul-mouthed Nationalists, from which his friends barely succeeded in rescuing him. The victim, the historian Ciccotti, later remarked in the Chamber that in Italy conservatives were more violent than most

revolutionaries, and could count on police connivance and encouragement: had he not been chased for over ten minutes by a mob right in the heart of Rome, almost at the doors of the police headquarters? Nor was this the only example of the Nationalists' violent contempt for Parliament, nor the only accusation of police complicity in such outrages. As a reformist Socialist deputy noted, the Red Week incidents in Rome came close to outright intimidation of Parliament. In much of Italy a sort of pre-Fascism was in the air: for example, at Bologna violent Nationalist squads were more in evidence than proletarians, and the prefect there had to warn the Rightist organizations against taking the law into their own hands. (Only in Parma did the Reds have a monopoly of illegal violence.)[11]

In ideals as well as in fury Nationalism presented serious competition for the Left in 1914. If proletarian revolutionary leaders viewed themselves as an elite, so did the Nationalists. Syndicalists and revolutionary Socialists claimed to have risen above the shabby compromises of parliamentary politics, but the Nationalists made the same claim for themselves, and with some reason. (Of course both extremes sent deputies to Parliament when possible.) The Far Left envisioned a producers' revolution, but the Nationalists claimed to be pursuing the same economic goals through imperialism.

Red Week marks a turning-point in Italian politics, the real passage from Giolitti to Salandra. A vocal and substantial part of the Italian propertied classes wanted a "strong state," which would be a citadel of the bourgeois elite rather than a neutral balancing force between different social classes. Salandra had come close to espousing a similar conception of bourgeois elite rule before 1914: now he took a step further toward Nationalism. The Red Week risings had the effect of driving him further away from a parliamentary system that he had never found perfectly congenial.

Salandra was by temperament and training foreign to the rough but comradely give-and-take of parliamentary life. His forebears were wealthy professional and landholding bourgeois of Puglia, who had taken the partiotic-unitary side during the bitter political struggles of South Italy in the last century. This meant that his family had taken arms against the peasant rebels of the 1860's, and had fostered the agrarian capitalism of Puglia later in the same century, with all the class conflicts attendant thereupon. Salandra had imbibed from his earliest years a distrust of democracy as rule of the masses, and his political career, up to the introduction of universal male suffrage, had shown it. The democrats in the Chamber well remembered his part in the repressive governments of Crispi and Pelloux, and doubted that he had changed. Salandra gave them no reason to think so. He was touchy, taking every observation personally, and often answered younger deputies with condescension or arrogance, combining authoritarianism and inner uncertainty.[12]

Salandra responded to deputies' interrogations about the disturbances at Ancona with frequent outbursts of exasperation and impatience, reacting sharply to remarks which a democratic leader would have shrugged off. Red Week showed that he did not wear well under parliamentary pressure. Though Salandra got a vote of confidence after fierce debating, 254 deputies voted for him instead of the 303 that had approved his ministry in April, and it was clear that his government had started badly. Salandra, whose police agents eavesdropped on all politically important telephone conservations, knew that there were "Giolittian" deputies anxious to get rid of him, and that someone in his own government had "leaked" a bit of information to the Socialists. In fact, Radicals and reformists, once supporters of Giolitti, refused him their confidence, and he was largely indebted to conservatives and Catholics for his margin of political

survival. Thus his government had taken on a definite political coloring as a results of Red Week: in Parliament and in the nation it emerged as an expression of the Right, a ministry which resorted to police measures and restricted public protest far more than any since 1900.[13]

This was politically dangerous in 1914, for the Libyan War was over, and much of Italian political opinion was reacting against the Army. When the antimilitarism campaign touched on the question of the disciplinary companies, to which any politically suspect soldier could be sent without trial or hearing, Italian democrats were concerned. Antimilitarism was incitement to mutiny and revolution in the hands of the Far Left, but to democrats it was a battle for the rights of man. The Salandra government and its right-wing supporters in the Chamber lumped them together, and concluded the Red Week debate with a volley of cheers for the Army. Though Salandra's professions of respect for constitutional freedoms were sincere, his conception of freedom was hemmed by an obsessive Southern-agrarian fear of the masses, which took the legal form of an overriding concern for public order.

To add to the Premier's fears and resentments came an anonymous report (evidently police information) on the Red Week insurrections in Romagna. According to this document, the reforms of Giolitti and Luzzatti were responsible for what had happened. Salandra's informant showed that previous governments had favored the Socialist-led cooperatives of Ravenna, enriching them with public-works contracts and thus putting them in a position to finance rebellion! Furthermore, the prefect, appointed by Salandra's predecessor, had failed to take advice in administrative matters from reliable local government supporters. It was easy for Salandra to come to the consoling conclusion that Giolitti, not himself, was really to blame for the troubles of the new ministry.[14]

At this moment, while Salandra was still receiving

dark police reports about a probable renewal of the strikes and risings of June, the World War broke out. Salandra immediately interpreted it as his great chance for personal vindication: "I only had modest intentions of putting back on its feet, so far as possible, the State, weakened by ten years of ruinous policies; but now I must enter into history," he wrote to Sonnino on 7 August.

To enter into history meant, for Salandra, release from a political trap. Instead of being condemned to watch his government slowly dissolve in an acid bath of parliamentary criticism and public disfavor, Salandra, as a war premier, could save himself and conservative Italy. A successful war, undertaken at just the right moment, could unseat Giolitti, give the conservative government authority and force to suppress the Reds, and open new horizons for Italian imperialism. It would lessen the role of parliament while adding new lustre to the military traditions of the monarchy. Neither Salandra nor his foreign ministers considered the possibilities of a long war, nor do they seem to have reflected on the dangerous passions to which they would have to appeal.

The outbreak of the First World War brought Salandra immediate relief from the pressures of the revolutionary Left, which split over the question of Italian intervention. Most of the Syndicalist leadership of 1914, as well as the Republicans and Mussolini, went over to interventionism, with mixed motives. Corridoni argued from the fiasco of Red Week that the Italian proletariat was not ready for social revolution: first, he said, it would have to go through a period of genuine democratic freedom. Entering into the war to defend democratic France against imperial Germany he saw as the first task of the proletariat, the necessary prelude to the democratization of Italy. Other revolutionaries argued that the War could be transformed into an international social revolution: at any rate, the proletariat would have arms instead of sticks and stones as during Red Week.

For Mussolini this was the first break in a difficult personal situation, for though he had boasted of being an "artifice" of Red Week, he was in fact weary of being a "scapegoat," as he put it, an intermediary between the Socialist Party and union labor in desultory uphill agitations. For him, too, war came as a release, a career opportunity, and an adventure.[15]

NOTES

1. Giolitti was informed that the Catholic leaders were mostly patricians or professional people, and that they were less "intransigent" than in the 1890's. Indeed, most of them seemed quite reconciled to the Italian State. See *Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale della Pubblica Sicurezza, Ufficio Riservato 1911-1915, Busta 16.*
2. Giolitti paid great attention to the attempts by the revolutionaries to infiltrate the Army, annotating personally a number of police reports on this subject and finding the spread of antimilitary agitation "truly impresseve." While the police were well posted on antimilitary agitation, often having the names of agitators, they found it difficult to trace individual propaganda by word of mouth, and urged the Army to take necessary measures: in fact, the military authorities were on guard, even to the extent of searching the laundry of soldiers suspected of antimilitary activities. *ACS, fondo citato*, see under rubic "*Antimilitarismo.*"
3. *ACS, fondo citato, buste 69, 93.* The Ministry of the Interior was well aware of these plans in April 1914. There were about 20,000 Syndicalist workers in the Parma area. Milan had a Syndicalist problem, but the prefect there was alert and well-informed. He was sure that any rail strike there would be partial and kept under control. *Ibid., busta 85.*
4. See *Ministero di Agricoltura, Industria e Commercio, Supplemento al Bollettino dell'Ufficio del Lavoro - N. 20 Statistica delle organizzazioni di lavoratori al 1° gennaio 1913* Rome, 1914). In 1912 there were over 100,000 members in the Syndacalists' overall national organization, with special strength in Bologna, Parma and Piacenza. The above-cited publication notes a Syndicalist labor union in the Parma zone as reporting that the rural laborer now

found his employment in public works rather than in field-labor.

5. See Libertario Guerrini, *Organizzazioni e lotte dei ferrovieri italiani* (*1862-1907*) (Florence, 1957).
6. See the April-June 1914 issues of *La Tribuna dei ferrovieri.* According to the above-cited labor statistics the railway *sindacato* numbered 49,000.
7. See the eyewitness accounts of Armando Borghi, an Anarchist leader, in his *Mezzo secolo di Anarchia* (*1898-1945*) (Naples, 1954), 145-152, and a personal reminiscence, Alceste De Ambris, *Filippo Corridoni* (Piacenza, 1922). Paolo Valera, *Mussolini* (Milan, 1924), gives a lively picture of Mussolini in these years, which can be easily corroborated. The Ministry of Interior, eavesdropping 7 February 1914 on a telephone call of Mussolini's, heard him say to the deputy Ciccotti: "I've been grabbed by the neck... I have a note for 500 liras with the Bank of Italy that's due and I do not have the money... see if you can do whatever is possible." Ciccotti promised to help him. *ACS, fondo citato, busta 75.*
8. See *ACS, Ministero Interno Gabinetto, Ufficio Cifra Copia Telegrammi,* 21 May - 6 June 1914.
9. See the Marxist Enzo Santarelli, *Il Socialismo Anarchico* (Milan, 1960), and Borghi, *op. cit.*, for lively accounts of the events of June 7-14. Aside from standard histories, I have relied on prefects' telegrams and reports, *ACS, fondo citato,* and the parliamentary discussions of Red Week. See also Giovanni Grilli, *Due Generazioni dalla settimana rossa alla guerra di liberazione* (Rome, 1953), 29-33, and Paolo Spriano, *Torino operaia nella grande guerra* (Turin, 1960), 61-67.
10. See *La Tribuna dei Ferrovieri,* 26 June 1914.
11. See *Atti del Parlamento, Camera dei Deputati,* Sessione 1913-1914, 3862-3892, 3938, 3973.
12. See the dark picture of Salandra in Gaetano Natale, *Le "Giornate radiose" del Maggio 1915, Estratto da Quaderni di Cultura e Storia Sociale Nov. 1953* and De Biase, *Antonio Salandra* (Rome, 1919). Antonio Salandra, *Politica e Legislazione Saggi raccolti da G. Fortunato* (Bari, 1915) and *La Politica nazionale e il partito liberale* (Milan, 1912) give a good idea of his political orientation at the moment he became premier, and Vincenzo Galizzi in his *Giolitti e Salandra* (Bari, 1949), outlined Salandra's conservatism sharply. Salandra identified liberalism as a political method

and ideal with liberalism as a property-owners' political party, in a rather crude manner, and with similar misplaced concreteness considered the State as an "ethical substance" upheld, among the masses, by "authoritarian" Catholic morality (only a few, he thought, can find moral law within themselves). Salandra's aristocratic nineteenth-century liberalism made him an outright conservative in the twentieth century. His distrust of democracy was innate and entire, a part of his general fear of the masses. In 1912 he pointed out that the South Italian bourgeoisie could no longer control local administrations by the old methods, once universal suffrage was in effect, and he urged the Southern bourgeois to assume a "national" role as their one hope of political survival; that is, local conservatism could no longer be combined with parliamentary liberalism. Instead, local conservatives must impose a truly "national" policy, as he put it, on the central government. Salandra was especially sensitive about his Southern origins: in September 1915 General Cadorna had to assure the Premier that Southern troops were performing well in the trenches. See *ACS, fondo Salandra, busta 7, fascicolo 55.*

13. Conservative Catholic support for Salandra is not hard to account for. Tommaso Tittoni was the link between conservative Catholic notables and Italy's successive liberal regimes, serving as prefect, minister or ambassador in one ministry after another, with Salandra as with Giolitti, and well represented a certain conservative state of mind in Italy that joined liberal and Catholic notables in common blocs of order. Tittoni regarded Red Week as being a hair's breadth from civil war. See his *Ricordi personali* in *Nuova Antologia*, 1 April and 16 April 1929. Another substantial link between Salandra and the conservative Catholic notables was the Bank of Rome. In June 1914 the Foreign Ministry was urging Salandra to settle a dispute between the Italian government and the Bank concerning Libyan war services. The Foreign Ministry emphasized the Bank's "relations with the ecclesiastical element" and the consequent advantages of collaboration between the Bank and the Italian State in the Orient and in Ethiopia. See *ACS, fondo Salandra, busta 8, fascicolo 63.*
14. *ACS, fondo citato, fascicolo 64.*
15. On 22 July 1914, when the Government was still apprehensive about the railwaymen, it overheard a

telephone conversation between two newsmen concerning a possible strike. One assured the other that Mussolini would take no part in railwaymen's strike organization meetings. Evidently mindful of what had happened the previous month, Mussolini refused a "scapegoat" role: Red Week still galled him. See *ACS, Ministero dell'Interno, D.G.P.S., Ufficio Riservato 1911-15, busta 85.* Corridoni's political change in 1914 is described in his own *Sindacalismo e repubblica,* his last political tract, republished at Milan in 1945.

Landscape and Guide: Dante's Modifying of Meaning in the *Inferno*

Joseph Pequigney and Hubert Dreyfus

[This essay on the Inferno is an early version of one belonging to a projected series of interrelated studies of the *Divine Comedy*. Mr. Hubert Dreyfus has done both his undergraduate and graduate work at Harvard University, where he was a Teaching Fellow. He has taught at Brandeis University, and is at present an Instructor in Philosophy at M.I.T. Mr. Joseph Pequigney studied at Notre Dame and Minnesota, and holds a Ph.D. from Harvard, where he was also a Treaching Fellow. He has taught at M.I.T., and is now an Assistant Professor of English in the State University of New York, Long Island Center, at Oyster Bay.]

In Canto VIII of the *Inferno* Dante and Virgil cross the River Styx and reach the gate of the City of Dis. The devil-topped wall of this city marks the boundary between upper and lower hell, becomes an obstacle and a crisis in the journey, and signals an important change in the infernal topography. Our attempt here is to understand the significance of the wall and of the entire landscape of which it is a part. If we attend closely to the setting as well as to Virgil, we shall find that the ancient poet does not perhaps speak so authoritatively as critics have usually supposed,[1] and that the wall and the landscape provide silent but illuminating Christian correctives to his ethical theory.

But we must, in order to discover and define the meaning of the wall, look back to the region of the Incontinent, and particularly at the relationship between punishment and landscape in that region. The uppermost

of the circles of the Incontinent contains erotic lovers who are whirled and smitten by winds. Behind this scene lies the simile that passion is like a tempest. One element of the simile, the tempest, has been made the literal setting and agent of the punishment, and has become a symbol of the other element, passion. Wind stands for passion because it disturbs and lashes (*gastiga*); its up-and-down motion (*di giù, di su li mena*) evokes the alternate elation and depression of emotional infatuation. The souls, in the afterlife as in this life, are caught up in an endless restlessness. Their feeling in the storm repeats and continues their dominant feeling of passion: a sense of being swept along, a sense of submitting to a force they cannot control. The torment induced by the winds projects into eternity their normal psychological dispositions. The sinner has chosen the sin; the punishment belongs essentially to the state of being in the sin; therefore the sinner has chosen the punishment.

The incontinent must eternally endure situations based on metaphors descriptive of their sins, metaphors such as the tempestuousness of passion, the hoggishness of gluttony, the burden of material possessions, or the suffocation of anger. The pivotal point of the metaphor is the feeling that is to be associated with both tenor and vehicle, such as the choked feeling common to suffocation and anger; the feeling is one of misery. Hence the pain of the punishment is woven inextricably into the sinner's life. These metaphors spring up as a kind of natural analogue of the psychological state. They embody the psychological torment of the disposition which is not only the root of the sin but which is the sin itself; the words *gluttonous* and *carnal* apply to desires as to satisfactions, to tendencies and to acts.

The conversion of these metaphors into scene and symbol demands the use of dramatic action as well as setting. The terrain of the fourth circle is covered with heavy stones which the misers and spendthrifts push with

their chests. The stones, necessary props, symbolize the feeling of weight and resistance that harasses the plodding sinners. If the rich man is burdened by his gold, the word *burdened* refers to the physical weight of the gold and also the psychological weight of possessions, the constant worry and effort needed to accumulate them and to keep them intact. The stones are such burdens, both physical and psychological, both literal and symbolic.

The wrathful are eternally wrathful. They act out their sin and its inseparable disposition forever. And the unpleasantness of being always in a state of wrath is their punishment. Their companions, the sullen, are submerged in muddy water. They send up bubbles to the surface. The bubbles and gurgling suggest the painful feeling of being choked with anger. The setting makes possible the acting out of their sin and its punishment; the water provides a situation to which they can painfully react with a pain that belongs to the state of being angry. We see here, as in the whole region of the Incontinent, the set and the action as interdependent, a single cluster, one image of the sinful state of the soul, the activity of the soul, and the punishment.[2]

At the end of the area of the incontinent the glowing iron wall of the City of Dis rises to obstruct Dante and Virgil. This wall apparently serves one main purpose: to exclude. The devils, far from resenting imprisonment, rather regard the wall and its moat, the River Styx, as a means of warding off the enemy. That enemy may have originally been Christ Himself. When He visited hell after His death, the devils tried to prevent His entering at the first gate: *Questa lor tracotanza non è nova, / Chè già l'usaro a men secreta porta* (VIII. 124-125). They seem to have retired to the wall as to a second line of defence. And as they may have intended to exclude Christ then, so they are definitely excluding Dante now. They will allow Virgil alone to enter, for he is one of the damned, and besides had been there before (on a mission for the

sorceress Erichtho). When Virgil goes forth to hold parley with the defenders, Dante, remaining out of earshot, does not report what his companion has proposed. However, Virgil's last remark before leaving Dante was

> 'Non temer chè 'l nostro passo
> Non ci può torre alcun dal tal n'è dato.'
>
> VIII, 104-105.

> "Fear not, for no one can take away from us our passage, by Such an one is it given to us."[3]

We may assume, then, that Virgil informed his adversaries that Dante is on a divinely sanctioned mission. The result is that they rush in pellmell and close the gate. Virgil is puzzled by the resistance he meets:

> Li occhi a la terra, e le ciglia avea rase
> D'ogni baldanza, e dicea ne' sospiri:
> ' Chi m'ha negate le dolenti case? '
>
> VIII, 117-120.

> He had his eyes on the ground, and his brows were shorn of all hardihood, and he was saying with sighs: "Who has denied to me the houses of woe?"

He had not anticipated this diabolic behavior. He is aware that these demons had attempted to oppose Christ at the less secret gate, but he had apparently failed to understand their motives, motives the same then as now, to reject any divine interference or influence. Although he realizes that the wall serves to mark a division between two different categories of sin, he does not expect to find it used as an obstruction. To find a reason for Virgil's perplexity we must begin by examining his exposition of the major divisions of sin.

Virgil's classification of sin within the wall in Canto XI has certain peculiar features. Every crime punished within the City of Dis, we are told, has harm (*ingiuria*) for its object. Violence does its injury — whether to God,

oneself, or one's neighbors — by means of force. Fraud is *de l'uom proprio male* (fraud is man's own undoing) because it perversely employs, consciously abuses human reason. Finally, treachery or betrayal, a subdivision of fraud, violates a personal relationship that has existed between the criminal and his victim. Hence each lower category within the wall adds some new element to the evil of the previous sins. Violence harms others; fraud harms others and perverts reason; treachery harms others and perverts reason and breaks a special trust. Virgil's classification is unable to explain the order of the sins in *basso inferno* without resorting at each juncture to a new and apparently *ad hoc* qualification. It is as if at each new region he must invent a new explanation.

Dante seems satisfied with Virgil's explanation, but asks two important questions concerning the Incontinent:

> ' Perchè non dentro da la città roggia
> Sono ei puniti, se Dio li ha in ira?
> E se non li ha, perchè sono a tal foggia? '
> XI, 73-75.

> "Why are they not punished within the ruddy city if God be wroth with them? And if he be not so, why are they in such a plight?"

Dante wants to know why incontinence is a sin, why it is a less serious sin than violence or fraud, and the precise significance of the wall. The questions seem simple enough, innocent enough, and certainly appropriate. But Virgil is strangely annoyed:

> ' Perchè tanto delira,
> Disse, 'lo 'ngegno tuo da quel che suole?
> O ver la mente dove altrove mira? '
> XI, 76-78.

> "Why dost thy wit so wander beyond its wont? or thy mind, where else is it gazing?"

After reproving his pupil, Virgil advises him to call to mind the *Ethics* of Aristotle. The *Nichomachean Ethics* does explain why incontinence is wrong: because a particular object seems so desirable to the incontinent man that he allows his appetite to move toward it, while at the same time, like one asleep or drunk, he loses his awareness of the right rule or moral principle that should govern his behavior (VII, 3). In this discrepancy between rule and activity lies the fault. On the other hand, the incontinent man is only half-wicked. What he seeks is good in itself. He *ignores* the right rule, but makes no attempt to replace it with wrong principles of conduct (VII, 10). He intends no malice, as the fraudulent man does; he injures no one else, as do the fraudulent and the violent. Virgil can appeal to Aristotle, then, to explain the guilt and the position of the Incontinent.

The pagan poet has theories for the hierarchical division of hell. The drama at the gate supports his notion that Dis is the city of those who had sought to harm others, for the demons had attempted to injure Dante, both by sending him back alone, without a guide, and by petrifying him with the Medusa head. What Virgil has not explained is why the division between incontinence and the more grievous sins takes the form of a wall, or why a *wall* should appear just where it does, or why it encloses only two of the three categories of sin — in short what the wall stands for. And a dim consciousness of this failure perhaps accounts for his bewilderment at the behavior of the devils on the ramparts as well as his initial irritation at Dante's questions.

There are hints enough scattered through the *Inferno* that should make the reader wary of accepting Virgil as a completely reliable interpreter of events. He not only needs direct supernatural aid, a heavenly angel, in order to enter the *città roggia* — human reason proves inadequate to the task — but he is also tricked by devils

in Canto XXII and tellingly rebuked by hypocrites in Canto XXIII. In Canto II he characterizes Beatrice as a

> ' ...donna di virtù, sola per cui
> L'umana spezie eccede ogni contento
> Di quel ciel c' ha minor li cerchi sui... '
> II, 76-78.

> "...Lady of Virtue, through whom alone the human race excels all contained within that heaven which has the smallest circles..."

To him she is only such a figure as the Lady Philosophy of Boethius. Actually she is much more. When she appears in the Garden of Eden, she comes as Christ, as Professor Charles Singleton has demonstrated.[4] Her descent into hell is part of this analogical pattern, as we shall come to understand retrospectively once this pattern has been unfolded, but Virgil is without awareness of such analogues.[5] When Christ himself descended into Limbo, the Roman saw merely *un possente / Con segno di vittoria coronato* (IV, 53-54) — a warrior, a hero, an Achilles or Hercules, a figure of Homeric virtue. In describing the Harrowing of Hell, at the earthquake of the Crucifixion, Virgil says, with a fine irony of which he seems unconscious,

> ' Da tutte parti l'alta valle feda
> Tremò sì ch' i' pensai che l'universo
> Sentisse amor, per lo qual è chi creda
> Più volte il mondo in caòs converso. '
> XII. 40-43.

> "...on all sides the deep foul valley trembled, so that I thought the universe felt love whereby, as some believe, the world has oft-times been converted into chaos."

The reference is to an idea of Empedocles that a conflict or hatred in the elements material reality, and that love, unity, the drawing together of the elemental seeds will

restore chaos and destroy the world. The love of Christ has indeed struck creation with shattering effect, but redemptively, not destructively, in a way far different from that which the pagan had imagined.

It is significant that Virgil gives his version of the ethical scheme of hell in the sixth circle, that of the Heretics. This context provides ironic and cautioning comment on the exposition. Furthermore, the omission of heresy from that exposition indicates that Virgil's understanding of hell is incomplete. The omission is usually accounted for by the fact that heresy is a specifically Christian sin and Aristotle of course makes no mention of it. The fact is that pagans as well as Christians inhabit the sixth circle. In that part of it that the two travelers visit, Epicurus is punished with all his followers (X, 13-14) — all those, that is, who deny the immortality of the soul. Their denial determines the symbolism; the eternal death that they expected is represented by their confinement in fiery tombs. That Virgil has nothing to say about this form of heresy has dramatic point. Immortality is, for Dante the author, the condition of, and meaningful in terms of, total fulfillment, union with God. But Virgil, doomed not to pain but to an endless frustation — *senza speme vivemo in disio* (IV, 42) — neither conceived of nor expected an eternity of fruition and joy (as his account of the Elysian Fields in the Aeneid indicates). Since the afterlife in the poem always ratifies and projects the choices and expectations of this life, he experiences only perpetual duration in Limbo, and fails to comprehend the true issue, the full horror, of that heresy which, in denying immortality, precludes salvation as well.

Dante's questions concerning the guilt of the Incontinent and his guide's impatience with those questions point to a fundamental difficulty, Virgil's lack of a unifying theory of sin. Although he realizes that *incontinenza / Men Dio offende e men biasimo accatta*

(XI, 83-84) (incontinence offends God least and acquires least blame), Virgil apparently does not fully understand why this is so, has not given an adequate explanation of the divine principle of degrees of condemnation; he seems to have in mind simply the classical notion of God who supports the moral law and justly punishes offenses against it, not the Christian Deity who quiets the restless human heart. He has no essential definition of sinfulness, one by an appeal to the norms of which the magnitude of any particular sin can be determined.

If there is such a unifying theory in the *Inferno*, and if Virgil is unable to grasp it, then it must lack a spokesman, lack abstract articulation. Dante as character does not fully realize the actual nature of sin until he has completed his journey, until after he has the wisdom of Beatrice and of Paradise. But there is still the hell itself that God created. We must read the symbolism of the landscape and the wall, and interpret this symbolism in the light of the entire *Comedy*, from perspectives denied forever to Virgil and not yet achieved by Dante the traveler through these dark regions.

In Virgil's explanations the wall of Dis does not assume the importance that it does in the narrative because Virgil is thinking strictly in moral terms. The scheme of hell, however, is Christian, and is not in ethical categories but in religious ones. For Dante (the author) the only possible religious response involves the full abandonment of self. The end of man, his total fulfillment, lies in his complete submission to God, in contemplating and loving Him.[6] Here alone is peace and the satisfaction of every desire. Any other course must lead to frustration. Sin in the *Divine Comedy* may be defined as self-exclusion from total fulfillment.

One way to exclude oneself from total fulfillment is through incontinence. The incontinent man, giving himself over to sex, food, or riches, sets these objects up, and worships them, as gods. Since Virgil in this life felt

nothing worthy of such abandonment, the response itself is for him an excessive, immoderate, ethically faulty one. Never expecting nor aspiring toward eternal union with God, he knew of no being that deserved complete love or would satisfy the whole person. To Dante as author such fullness of response can be proper and holy, or it can be misdirected. Incontinence misdirects love, and in seeking total fulfillment from a creature, is a kind of idolatry.

But from Dante's religious perspective there is a crucial difference between those who worship false gods and those who actively reject God and His creation. While God wills openness to the attractiveness of being, with His own the supremely attractive nature, the sinners of Dis on earth closed themselves off, and would admit only what or whom they pleased. They refused in various ways to submit to things outside themselves, but would rather force things outside to submit to them. They kept control over themselves, they preserved their prerogative of wilful and calculated action, they tended to prefer autonomy to abandonment.[7] The Incontinent had, at least, the responsiveness, the love, that characterizes a religious orientation. The Violent and Fraudulent, because of their wrong orientation, would have needed for redemption a radical rebirth; they would have had to change their whole response to life.

Virgil's ethical pronouncements are not irrelevant, they label some of the divisions of hell, they shed at least a superficial light, but they fail to lead one to the basic religious idea that radiates through the *Inferno* and integrates it with the other two *cantiche*. As a kind of naturalistic philosopher in the *Inferno*, Virgil holds that the defining characteristic of the sins punished within the City of Dis is their injurious effect. But since this notion does not apply to those encountered outside the city, injuriousness cannot be taken as an essential property of all sinfulness. Furthermore, even though harm results

from all the sins inside the wall, one cannot determine the seriousness of the sin by asking how much harm it causes. The hypocrite, for example, is more guilty than the reckless killer. Virgil at best classifies by *propria* rather than *essentia.*

The citizens of the City of Dis are glimpsed in their characteristic gesture, the gesture of rejection, when they refuse to allow Dante inside the gate, and when earlier they possibly manned the walls to prevent Christ from entering. The incident at the wall dramatizes an active exclusion for the purpose of preserving the autonomy of the city. The wall represents the refusal ever to relinquish the bastion of one's own will. Virgil would not have been so perplexed by the repulsion, but might have expected the diabolic behavior he encountered, had he understood the meaning of the wall as wilful, active rejection. It marks the line separating those who responded naturally to the world from those who inclined toward partial or complete autonomy. To become autonomous is to close oneself as if by a wall, and to defend oneself against the assaults that desirable objects constantly make upon the consciousness, to regard these objects as threats to security that must be evaded or destroyed. The autonomous man is isolated, irresponsible, and dangerous

Inside the City of Dis we will find deeds separated from dispositions by wilfulness, and a new relationship among action, disposition, and punishment. Since the normal response to objects is denied, a new object of response will have to be substituted or new goals invented by the sinner. Action must in some way be initiated by will, since it no longer flows spontaneously out of the disposition. How all this works out in detail will be shown in our analyses of the later cantos.

The Violent of the seventh circle take a normal feeling or response — love of neighbor, the heterosexual drive, the instinct for self-preservation, reverence — and in some mysterious and perhaps unconscious way deny it.

To reject such instincts is not only to reject a significant and satisfying part of experience, but also to suppress an important part of one's personality. This rejection is only half the psychological process; there is also substitution. The violent must find new goals to strive for; they must endow an object with an attractiveness or an action with a satisfaction that it does not normally possess.

The process of projecting a fantasy is dramatized in the *Divine Comedy* in Dante's dream of the Siren in the Purgatorio (Canto XIX). He dreams of an ugly woman who, as he gazes upon her lustfully, becomes transformed before his eyes into a beautiful and desirable Siren. Then a modest lady — Discernment — enters the scene to expose again the true foulness of the Siren. The dream dramatizes the psychological operation by which one turns finite goods into gods, projecting into these goods a capacity to satisfy that they do not actually have, as a preparation for abandoning oneself to them completely. The dream has reference to incontinence (purged on the upper three tiers of Purgatory), to which, however, violence has a certain kinship and resemblance. The two types of sin look alike because in each there is an impulsive enactment, and because in each the psyche projects a kind of illusory and subjective attractiveness upon an object. The Incontinent have merely exaggerated this attractiveness where it had already existed, while the Violent have read it in completely. The chief distinction is that the Violent have denied a natural attraction and have substituted another; the Incontinent have neither denied nor substituted. Because the Violent directly abuse a proper response to reality, they exert a disruptive influence, they violate the created order. Dante seems to conceive of the rejection and substitution as somehow wilful. At some point, even if in childhood or unconsciously, but in a way for which they are guilty, they must have deflected their natural impulses. It is with violence (and the special category of heresy), and at the

wall, that active rejection or wilfulness enters the *Inferno.*

The Violent Against Others — tyrants, conquerors, robbers — are boiling in a river of blood. These sinners killed ruthlessly and heatedly, in personal engagements with their victims, but without premeditation or the hired assassin. They are cruel and destructive, but there is a kind of reckless passion in their crimes. The pain of the punishment comes from the heat which cooks them and the gore which covers them. The setting suggests the heated temperament underlying the act and the spilt blood that results from the act. The landscape embodies the pertinent metaphors of hot-blooded and blood-stained. Yet something is missing — the act itself. The shades, whose lives had been so full of fierce energy and violent action, here are passive, are still.

An element of choice has entered the sinful situation, of free deflection of passion. One can no longer describe the action simply by describing the passion, as in the case, for example, of gluttony. To say that a man is hot-blooded tells us nothing about the specific acts that may derive from his heated state. Because of this gap between deed and disposition, Dante has portrayed the disposition in the landscape, but not the specific deeds. The absence of action from the scene perhaps points to an illuminating fact about the Violent. These sinners rejected the intense love they must have been capable of (for these are passionate natures, and courageous ones); they have turned their capacity for love — the normal reaction to others, and a prerequisite for the existence of society, for the continuance of life itself — into fierce destructiveness. They are characterized not so much by what they do as by the way they pervert their natural response. It is this perversion rather than their violent deeds that the treatment emphasizes. The hot liquid in which they are boiled, and in which they are punished — pain is still linked to disposition, as with the Incontinent — suggests

the intensity of their response, and symbolizes the perversion of response as well.

Normally a stream is cool, refreshing, and cleansing, but this river of blood is hot, painful, and gory. The distorted landscape represents a distorted disposition. Unnatural detail everywhere marks the terrain of the seventh circle: trees bleeding, and fire falling instead of rising, and in flakes, like hot yellow snow. Such detail is not found in the region of the Incontinent, whose appetites, however overindulged, remain normal, seek the proper object. Outside the City of Dis the landscape had contained wind, rocks, water, hail, mud. The eerie and distorted settings begin to appear, appropriately, within the wall, where the sinners, mysteriously dissatisfied with the natural order, have attempted to derange themselves and perversely to alter creation.

In the Wood of Suicides there is an unique relationship — that is, no distinction between the sinners and the setting; the souls as bushes with gnarled and warped branches, dark and without green leaf or fruit, *are* the landscape. They have chosen to deprive themselves of human form and motion, to reject the animal instinct of self-preservation. They have substituted a desire for extinction, not so much because they have hated themselves as because they have loved themselves too much to be able to endure discomfort or disgrace. Full of self-pity, stifled and ineffectual, they finally succeeded in expressing themselves by their self-inflicted deaths. Now, in hell, they can utter their sorrow only by hissing forth blood when they are broken. Originally they broke themselves, and now they are broken by hounds rushing through the pathless brush, or by harpies plucking the thorny boughs. They shrink from the pain of the wounds, but through these wounds alone can they find relief from being smothered within the trunks and find an outlet for expressing their despair. Formerly they must have recoiled from the pain of the suicidal act, yet welcomed

the escape it offered and the dramatic means of protest. These vegetable souls are, as they always were, passive, unable to affect their environment. They cannot run from the hounds or harpies nor strike back nor gather up their lost and lamented twigs. Here the weird and stunted landscape bears the entire burden of comment on the lives and distorted disposition of the Suicides.

In the third ring of the seventh circle the Sodomites are doomed to rush about forever, scorched by the falling flakes of fire. These sinners at some time in their lives — one cannot know at what point of development Dante thought the self-transformation to have occurred — refused the heterosexual drive and directed their desires toward some other and improper object. They have wilfully and permanently separated sexual activity from procreation, from the creative processes of nature. This self-sterilization is suggested by the arid sand of the landscape, by the plain that rejects every plant from its bed: *una landa / Che dal suo letto ogni pianta rimove* (XIV, 8-9). The personified sand, like the Sodomites, acts upon itself, chooses barrenness, is self-perverting. These shades are also in the restless motion that the author everywhere associates with carnal passion, but unlike the incontinent lovers, they are not swept along. The self-impelled motion intimates their wilfulness as well as their eternal pursuit of illusory goals. Their sin is the clearest case of violence, in which a fundamental rejection is accompanied by a substituted disposition and many possible perverse actions. The author solves the problem of this dissociation of rejection and substitution when he places the rejection in the landscape and the perverse action with its resulting restlessness in the foreground. He here unifies in a single impressive scene all the elements in complex relation that are necessary for a complete psychological description. Finally, the fiery flakes, the fire that destroyed Sodom in the Book of

Genesis, symbolize the perspective and judgment of Divine Revelation.

In Malebolge, where the fraudulent dwell, we find a new problem, solved by a new technique. In the area of the Incontinent we have seen the pain of the punishment to be identical with the pain of the sinner's disposition. Santayana realized this fact when he commented on the Francesca-Paolo episode of Canto V: "Abandon yourself, Dante would say to us, — abandon yourself altogether to a love that is nothing but love, and you are in hell already."[8] And abandon yourself to food, riches, or anger, and you are likewise in hell already. In the region of the Violent, the pain of the punishment is also linked to the painfulness of a wilfully distorted disposition. Pervert an impulse and give yourself over to it — whether hot-blooded cruelty, or self-destruction, or sodomy — and you are already in a deeper and a more tormenting hell. But with fraud the disposition is less pertinent, is often almost irrelevant, to the evil of the deed. Now it is no longer possible to introduce the pain of the punishment by introducing the disposition dramatically in the activity of the shades or symbolically in the setting.

The Fraudulent are defined by their conscious and calculated acts. They have rejected almost entirely any impulsive responsiveness. Their sinful activity has been initiated by will rather than by the attractiveness of external objects.[9] The author must now portray, not dispositions or states of soul, but specific deeds. But since no pain is attached to the performances of fraudulent acts, how is such a sinner to be punished? He cannot perform his fraudulent acts eternally, for that would involve no significant pain. Therefore the region of fraud demands a new kind of punishment.

We find this new punishment, for example, in the *bolgia* or pouch of the Schismatics. These sinners, on earth, each split some metaphorical body — the body politic, the mystical body that is the Chuch, or the family.

As a result, in hell the act of splitting is turned, painfully and vengefully, against them. Their own bodies are cleaved as they pass in slow procession before a devil wielding a slashing sword. But the schismatic on earth never felt the terrible pain of being physically rent. He may have caused a most tormenting and even fatal separation in his victim. The infernal torture he undergoes belonged to his victim's experience rather than his own. In hell the separator becomes the victim, and must submit to the kind of suffering that once he caused. Thus Bertran de Born, who sowed discord within the reigning family of England, holds his severed head in his hand like a lantern and declares:

> ' Perch' io parti così giunte persone,
> Partito porto il mio cerebro, lasso!
> Dal suo principio ch'è in questo troncone.
> Così s'osserva in me lo contrapasso. '
>
> XXVIII, 139-142

> "Because I divided person thus united, I carry my brain, alas! divided from its source which is in this trunk. Thus the retribution is observed in me."

And it is *contrapasso* or retribution — the harmful act turned tormentingly against its perpetrator -- that uniquely characterizes the punishments of Malebolge.

While the Schismatics themselves are passive in hell, their activity is not wholly excluded from the scene, but is assumed by the devil with the sword. Devils, or fallen angels, display a wilful evil, a perverted intelligence, a completely conscious malice, pristine fraud. And indeed, except for their appearance on the walls of Dis, they are found nowhere else than in the rocky furrows of Malebolge, where they repeat symbolically, as agents of punishment, various fraudulent sins. The schismatic devil splits the physical selves of those who have split the spiritual organism of church or state. Horned demons

with great whips lash the panders and seducers who had, on earth, exploited lust along with fraud to harm others. In the fifth *bolgia* a cruel, if farcical, cat-and-mouse game pits devils, who attempt to keep their victims submerged in boiling pitch, against barrators, who would come up for air and relief. The demons, as malicious public officials harming rather than aiding the governed, parody the careers of the barrators themselves. In all three cases we see the same pattern. A sin of fraud is symbolically acted out by devils. No pain is suffered by them; on the contrary, they seem to be enjoying themselves, and this fact suggests that there is no painfulness involved in committing acts of fraud.

Other punishments lack this diabolical agency. Thieves are transformed, excruciatingly, into snakes. The process has a certain appropriateness in its suggestion that these, who deprived others of goods or means of livelihood, and hence struck at their victim's very existence, are themselves deprived of humanity. They deprived and now are deprived. The active voice becomes the passive voice — that is the formula of Malebolge. The actor becomes the victim — that is the law of Malebolge. This formula and this law are quite different from the technique used to portray the incontinent sinner, whose eternal punishment is a continuation, rather than a vindicative reversal, of his temporal life. Critics of the poem have too often scanted this distinction, as does Professor Singleton when he remarks that "in the method of justice, generally, '*contrapasso*' appears in one way or another to prevail as a guiding principle."[10] The principle is enunciated by a sinner incarcerated in Malebolge and does not apply to the other divisions of hell.[11]

The fixed and ceaseless activity of the fraudulent may suggest multiple meanings, meanings that supplement but never displace the dominant scheme of relation. The thieves, for example, may be additionally interpreted as

men by day, and stealthy, quiet, and slinking snakes by night. Yet no pain was involved in this figurative self-transformation. The prerequisite for retaliation is that the pain directly stemming from the criminal act was felt immediately by its victim and not by its performer. The fire falling on the soles of the overturned simoniacs effectively parodies the Pentecostal fire that descended on the heads of the Apostles, but the simoniac in this world did not have to endure burning feet. The emblematic chastisement rather serves to warn the spectator of the seriousness of the sacrilege. The false counselors used their tongues to harm others, and now are encased in tongues of flame. Flame played no part in their earthly lives, and the fact that it is tongue-shaped, though symbolically and didactically appropriate, adds nothing to their actual torment. Forgers, liars, and other falsifiers corrupted their environment and are now corrupted by disease. Physical corruption represents moral corruption, and the pain of the sickness punishes misdeeds that were actually painless to perform. That the punishment of the soothsayers fully realizes the principle of *contrapasso* Virgil emphasizes when he says:

> ' Mira c' ha fatto petto de le spalle.
> Perchè volle veder troppo davante,
> Di retro guarda, e fa retroso calle. '
>
> XX, 37-39.

> "Look, how he has made a breast of his shoulders! Because he wished to see too far before him, he looks behind and goes a backward path."

The landscape comments significantly on the lives of these sinners. Malebolge, made of rock, slants in like a funnel toward a central pit, and ten successive deep ditches encircle its sides, one for each kind of fraudulent sin. The rock is hard and dry, barren of growth, bleak with its color of iron, and divided into isolating furrows.

As such it represents certain general characteristics of the fraudulent personality. These sinners had suppressed all spontaneity in their response and attachments to external reality, had kept tight control over the self, and had always based their conduct on malicious and egoistic calculation. Never impulsive, they had proceeded toward their objectives with detachment and liberation. Consciousness, control, and cunning marked the earthly behaviour of the thief or the false counselor, the liar or the simoniac. The rock of the setting suggests the hardness of the fraudulent heart that repels love or passionate responsiveness. The barrenness of the setting suggests unproductive activity. The rock closes in upon these shades who, in denying response (and hence responsibility), had broken their ties with other men. They had isolated themselves. In Malebolge the sinners are shut up into groups. Each is with others like himself, as with accomplices. In their prison walls — that repeat and re-emphasize the meaning of the wall of Dis — they either do not communicated with one another or openly oppose one another.

Although everywhere else in hell the landscape both represents the dispositions of the sinners and serves as an agent of their punishment, the rock of Malebolge does neither. A set of wilful acts rather than a certain disposition or state of soul constitutes fraud. The stony back-drop does not stand for a disposition toward a certain kind of action, but for common traits of character that might proliferate into many kinds of fraud. Dante pictures ten types in the ten ditches. The rock at no time participates directly in the punishment, because the fraudulent traits of personality, however dehumanizing, are not painful. Retributive punishment must be introduced because pain for the sinner is not inherent in the acts of fraud which he commits. The emphasis is primarily on the sinner's acts now turned against himself; disposition is excluded from the scene as irrelevant; and

the landscape symbolizes certain personal characteristics which underlie (and are the condition of) many kinds of sin.[12]

The treacherous are embedded about Satan in the frozen lake Cocytus at the very bottom of hell. These souls, according to the explanation of Virgil in Canto XI, are guilty of the same sin as those in Malebolge — fraud, but of a worse variety of that sin. He distinguishes between fraud practiced '*in colui che 'n lui fida / Ed in quel che fidanza non imborsa*' ("on one that confides in him, or on one that has no stock of confidence"). The first kind '*uccida / Pur lo vinco d'amor che fa natura*' ("cuts only the bond of love which nature makes"), while the second destroys not only this bond but also some '*fede spezial.*' The treacherous are indeed grouped into four rings according to the nature of the special trust that they have violated — traitors to family, to country or party, to guests, and to friends or benefactors. Virgil's account, then, stresses the intimate connection between simple and complex fraud, both harming others in the same way, with the injury in one case being more heinous because of the particular claims that the victim has on his assailant. However, the drama and the different settings of the eighth and ninth circles not only imply a more radical distinction between the two sins, but the symbolism of the ninth also provides, as Virgil does not, insight into the psychological root of treachery and its evil effect upon the soul from which it emanates.

The ice which encloses the sinners adds coldness to the hardness and sterility of the rock of Malebolge (the ice is as solid and tough as glass that would not crack under the weight of a falling mountain). The isolation which began to appear with the ditches of the fraudulent now reaches its climax. Each soul is sealed off in its own individual pocket, with only its head visible, although in exceptional instances two persons especially inimical to each other may conflictingly share a single pocket. In the

ring nearest to Satan, the ring of Giudecca, each is totally submerged — the isolation is complete. Isolation is suggested also by the inwardness of the sorrow of sinners whose tears freeze into the sockets of their eyes to prevent further crying, to stop up any outlet for their grief. This theme of isolation began its dramatic development earlier, when the two poets were approaching the limits of Malebolge, and Dante, observing towers ahead, had imagined that a city was looming in the murky distance. Although Virgil pointed out that these were not towers but giants, the impression registered that we were entering a second city. This impression recalls the ideas of defense and exclusion earlier associated with the City of Dis. The new region is thus made to seem the inner citadel or fortified palace, the heavily guarded stronghold of the emperor, Satan. If the outer walls of Dis stand for the rejection that those inside are guilty of, the innermost citadel suggests complete rejection or ultimate isolation.

Perhaps the central motif introduced into the ninth circle is the motionlessness of the figures there. All activity has been banished from the scene. The giants are half buried and chained. Satan is unable to move, nor can the shades of the treacherous lying packed in the ice about him. But why such stillness in these lowest depths?

To answer this question we must turn to the theory of love, the theory of responsiveness, that Virgil expounds in Canto XVIII of the *Purgatorio*. There he will explain that

> L'animo, ch' è creato ad amar presto,
> Ad ogni cosa è mobile che piace,
> Tosto che dal piacere in atto è desto.
> Vostra apprensiva da esser verace
> Tragge intenzione, e dentro a voi la spiega
> Si che l'animo ad essa volger face.
> E se, rivolto, in ver di lei si piega,
> Quel piegare è amor...
> ...l'animo preso entra in disire,

Ch'è moto spiritale, e mai non posa
Fin che la cosa amata il fa gioire. '

Purgatorio, XVIII, 19-26, 31-33.

"The mind, which is created apt to love, is mobile unto everything that pleases, so soon as by pleasure it is roused to action. Your faculty of apprehension draws an image from a real existence, and displays it within you, so that it makes the mind turn to it, that inclination is love... the captive mind enters into longing, which is a spiritual motion, and never rests until the thing beloved makes it rejoice."

The soul is characterized as open and responsive to external things and quick to love, as *mobile* toward whatever seems to offer pleasure, and easily roused into desire or "spiritual *motion*" by the "thing loved." The treacherous are motionless because nothing attracts them, they respond to nothing, they love and seek nothing. Even the fraudulent of the eighth circle had not shown such total repudiation. They had respected some human ties, such as those of family and benefactors, and might recognize some claims, such as that of gratitude. Furthermore, in their fraudulent sins some motivation had been discernible, a motivation too obscure to introduce into Malebolge and certainly less significant than their action; yet they had reached out for something, the thief and simoniac for money, the seducer for her who would satisfy his lust. But what had been the motivation of the Archbishop Ruggeri in causing the death, by starvation, of Ugolino and his children (Canto XXXIII)? Ruggieri wanted only to remove a threat to his own power and security. Such activity has added nothing to the self. Using his freedom to act merely to protect and enhance his freedom to act, he has been caught up in a kind of vacuous circularity.

Instead of pursuing some natural or unnatural goal, the treacherous soul wilfully asserts his own will. Refusing

to allow themselves to become attracted by things or attached to others, these traitors arrogantly demand complete independence or self-sufficiency; they are self-motivated; action in their lives had been almost accidental, a warding off rather than a moving toward. Their motionlessness about the three-headed figure of Satan weirdly mimics the peace of the saints who, contemplating the Trinity in the Celestial Rose, enjoy the peace of fulfillment (*l'animo preso... mai non posa / Fin che la cosa amata il fa gioire*). The motionlessness has a profoundly different meaning in each case: the saints are still because they have achieved the term of their spiritual motion, the end of desire; the traitors, because they have refused to be drawn toward any goal, have sought only to resist the solicitations of desirable things, to remain empty, immobile, and autonomous.

Autonomy is not a Dantesque term; *pride* is, and has in the poem an equivalent meaning. When the travellers come upon the sculptured examples of pride on the floor of the first terrace of Purgatory, they will find Satan represented first, followed by Briareus and Nimrod, two of the chained giants at the rim of the ninth circle. These two giants attempted to scale heaven and seize divine power. These symbols of pride, of self-assertion, are types of, and preparation for, the kind of sin to be punished at the bottom of hell. Pride, the worst of sins, is the opposite of love, and Satan, the giants, and the treacherous have, because of their pride, completely rejected love. They may have acted cruelly and energetically, but always for the sake of autonomy, which is not the calm of fulfillment but the motionlessness of refusing to be moved. What they sought they have achieved — to be isolated and unthreatened forever. The punishment is not retributive but, like that of the incontinent, the eternal projection of a most cherished state. Francesca and Paolo wanted to be together forever; they are, and that is their hell. The treacherous man would preserve his self-sufficiency.

He wanted nothing added to the self. Nothing has been added. He has, eternally, his shivering, naked self alone, his proud autonomy.

The ice represents the state of soul of the traitors. They were cold-blooded, and this metaphor has been translated into the setting. The ice is apparently red, solid blood, since the Phlegethon River, that of the boiling blood, empties in the frozen Cocytus at the bottom of hell. The liquid of the Phlegethon was still red when it passed through the burning sands, and there is no reason for it to have changed its color. The setting also suggests the hardness of the traitor's heart and the sterility of his loveless activity. The fact that the people here have lost their attachments and therefore their source of action is further borne out by the emphasis on weight and pressure, Satan himself is at the material center of the world, at *il punto / Al qual si traggon d'ogni parte i pesi* (the point to which from every part all weighty things are drawn). Dante strikes his foot against one frozen head, as though against a stone. He walks over other souls, wholly submerged *come festuca in vetro*. Some sinners in a single pocket press tightly, are clamped, butt heads. These treacherous souls are associated with inanimate matter because they have become like things, that is, incapable of initiating action, and involved in reciprocal collisions but not in the kind of personal interaction with one another and with their environment that differentiates human beings from objects.

Although Virgil's exposition would make the difference between simple and complex fraud, or fraud and treachery, a difference merely of degree, the poetic treatment of the two categories of sin indicates a deeper distinction. In Malebolge the activity of the sinner is stressed, the motivation is omitted; in the ice, the sinner's state of soul is emphasized, and activity is omitted. Activity is of the essence of fraud, and motivation is unimportant; a desire for complete autonomy

characterizes treachery, and activity, merely a means, is almost accidental. Although the fraudulent and the treacherous perform actions harmful to others, these harmful actions have a quite different meaning in each case, and define two quite diverse personalities. The similarities are superficial, the divergences profound.

When we look back at the infernal landscape, we find that the wall of the City of Dis marks an important change in the terrain. All detail of the setting outside that wall is natural, is to be found on earth. whether the green and pleasant, and lighted, land where the virtuous pagans are, or the wasps and insects of the limbo of the lukewarm, or the winds, stones, hail, and mud in the circles of the incontinent. No perversion of faculty or appetite entered into the guilt of any of these, and nothing preternatural appears in the symbolic environment. At the walls of the City of Dis devils — as distinct from symbolic monsters of mythology — appear for the first time. Devils appear only here and in Malebolge. Inside the city a greater emphasis is placed on nakedness, and on grotesqueness as the sinners become scorched, split, lute-shaped, or their heads are twisted backwards. Inside the city we find weirdly distorted versions of familiar earthly landscapes. We find, also, gradual and significant transformations in the setting. In the region of violence the river of blood is hot and wet, the adjacent ring is covered with stunted, tangled bushes, without fruit or foliage, that bleed and speak, while the sand of the third ring is hot, dry, and barren. The rock of Malebolge is hard, dry, bleak, sterile, and isolating. The red ice of the ninth circle is hard, dry, sterile, heavily pressing, more completely isolating, and cold from the freezing winds of Satan's flapping wings. The landscape within the wall progresses, in a more or less orderly way, from the red river to the red ice, from wet and hot and supporting some growth to dry and hard and cold and barren.

The orderly transformations in the landscape support the increasing gravity of the sinfulness, an increasing gravity that can be deduced from a definition of sin never articulated — never really understood — by Virgil, but implied in the *Divine Comedy* as a whole. That definition is self-exclusion from total fulfillment, God alone being totally fulfilling. The incontinent do not explicitly reject God but they ignore Him. Their orientation is right, but their love is idolatrous, for it is totally submissive to finite things. But the violent, unlike the incontinent, cut themselves off from normal worldly fulfillments. They reject natural objects and substitute artificial ones, and although they might derive some satisfaction from these, they will derive less satisfaction than from the natural good they reject. The fraudulent reject the more satisfying spontaneous enjoyments altogether. They allow themselves only those means of satisfaction that they can control. The treacherous, seeking only security, willingly forfeit all the fulfillment of God and the world. The progress of sin in hell is from partial fulfillment to total unfulfillment.

Virgil's explanation of sin is inadequate chiefly because he does not have a normative definition. One by which he can deduce the degrees of evil and the intensity of suffering, both of which can be gauged by how nearly one approaches, or by how far one falls short of, total fulfillment. In Cantos XVII and XVIII of the *Purgatorio*, in the middle of the *Comedy*, Virgil does indeed enunciate a theory of fulfillment or a response psychology, one that has such relevance for the first *cantica* that we have drawn upon it frequently to interpret the detail of the *Inferno*. Why, then, does Virgil himself not apply it to hell? He, like any wise teacher, understands, and operates within, the capacities of his pupil. When Dante (the character) is a novice, in hell, he receives elementary instruction, and when he is further along on his spiritual journey, on the mountain, he is ready for, and acquires,

a deeper awareness of the moral scheme of the universe. That Virgil's exposition in the circle of the heretics is more superficial, less comprehensive, than that later given on the terrace of the slothful can be partially accounted for by the growth of his disciple. However, the matter is more complex, the absence of the purgatorial theory of love from hell less accidental. Various details throughout both *cantiche* caution the reader against a full and simple acceptance of Virgil's doctrine. But a discussion of the errors that characterize that doctrine in the *Purgatorio*, and the amendment by Beatrice needed to make it perfectly applicable to the *Inferno*, would be long and would range far beyond our present scope.

One is not surprised that an artist as great and sophisticated as Dante refused to write an interpretation into his poem, but chose rather to let the symbolism, the action and the setting, speak for themselves. It is not that he has tried, through Virgil, to mislead the reader. Virgil's ethical explanation tends to be valid as far as it goes, but is relatively superficial and quite incomplete. The action and the setting qualify and supplement that explanation, and bring to bear a religious perspective. The setting especially, both in its own meanings and in its relation to the drama enacted upon its surfaces, suggests Christian psychological insight that Virgil never dreamed of in his philosophy. The vivid and varied landscape, designed, as the lines over hellgate proclaim, by the Trinity of divine Power, Wisdom, and Love, offers a system of emblems that make a profounder comment than the pagan poet can on the sinful possibilities of the human soul.

FOOTNOTES

1. That Virgil's account of hell has been considered unquestionably official, authoritative, and Dantesque, the following typical comments testify. "Dante's classification

of sins is based chiefly on Aristotle, with a little assistance from Cicero" (Dorothy L. Sayers, ed. and trans., *Hell*, Penguin books, 1951, p. 139). "...if Aristotle had correctly classified moral qualities, as he had — then it follows that Aristotle (without knowing it) must have supplied the ground-plan, as it were, of hell and heaven. Such was Dante's thought" (Santayana, *Three Philosophical Poets*, Cambridge, Mass., 1927, p. 108). The "plan is taken partly from Cicero and partly from Aristotle, the authority of the latter being hardly less for Dante than that of Scripture" (John D. Sinclair, ed. and trans., *Inferno*, London, 1948, p. 152). "The ethical plan of Dante's underworld is Aristotelian" (C. H. Grandgent, *Dante*, New York, 1921, p. 353). Sinclair finds Canto XI "the most prosaic in the Inferno, being little more than a verbal diagram" (Ibid.). This canto is less prosaic, more dramatic when one recognizes that this verbal diagram is counterpointed by a symbolic diagram implanted in the landscape, when one perceives the tensions between Virgil's Aristotelian-Ciceronian plan and the different Dantean scheme realized in situations and settings. These comments tend to confuse Dante the author with Virgil the character, and to allow explicit philosophical statement to obscure the elements in the poem that qualify that statement.

2. A supplementary pattern unfolds in this area of hell as each person in some way merges with or becomes the thing he loves. Francesca and Paolo whirl in an eternal embrace: *Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso* (V, 135). Francesca's constant use in speech of the first person plural pronoun stresses the union in thought and sentiment that accompanies their bodily union. Gluttons, who lie on stinking ground under cold rain, howl like dogs, and are chewed upon by Cerberus, show themselves transformed into animals in a sty. Corpulent and succulent, the glutton becomes the hog whose flesh he loves and adds to himself, flesh fattened to fatten him. The misers are not only attached to the weights that they roll with their chests — a merging of man and matter — but they are faceless, unrecognizable: *ad ogni conoscenza... bruni* (VII, 54). The personality obscured, they take on the characteristics, the *thingness*, of the material goods they have loved above all else. A progressive deterioration occurs. The carnal lovers retain their human forms, the gluttons are animal-like, the avaricious are half-turned into brute matter. When St.

Augustine observes, in the *De Trinitate*, that the soul "by loving another thing together with itself, has confounded itself with and in some sense has grown one with it," he articulates an idea that finds poetic realization in the upper three tiers of Incontinence. The Angry continuously rage and fight one another. They keep their human shapes because rather than being attached to, they are repelled by, persons and things. They are different from the other incontinent sinners: they do not exaggerate love or desire but overindulge a natural emotion, indignation, which can be righteous and appropriate, as Dante shows in becoming infuriated with Filippo Argenti, a reaction approved by Virgil.

3. The English translations of lengthy passages are those of Charles Eliot Norton. The others are by the staff of the Italian Quarterly.
4. See "The Pattern at the Center," *Commedia, Elements of Structure*, Cambridge, Mass., 1954.
5. See also Singleton, "Lady Philosophy or Wisdom," *Journey to Beatrice*, Cambridge, Mass., 1958, especially pp. 127-131.
6. This distinction between the ethical and the religious, while Kierkegaardian, is also implied by St. Thomas Aquinas. In Book III of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* he shows "that man's ultimate happiness does not consist in acts of the moral virtues" (Chapter XXXIV), and "that man's ultimate happiness consists in contemplating God" (Chapter XXXVII). That the Virgil of the *Divine Comedy* does not achieve ultimate happiness is indicated by his assignment to Limbo; because he is concerned only with the ethical perfection of his disciple, his perspectives are limited, and even at times distorted. Beatrice, concerned with the religious fulfillment of the man who loves her, will not only extend but in important ways alter these perspectives.
7. St. Thomas, inquiring "whether carnal sins are of less guilt than spiritual sins," writes that "carnal sin, as such, denotes more a *turning to* something, and for that reason implies a closer cleaving: whereas spiritual sin denotes more a *turning from* something, whence the notion of guilt arises, and for this reason it involves greater sin" (*Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q. 73, Art. 5).
8. *Three Philosophical Poets*, Cambridge, Mass., 1927, p. 120.
9. St. Thomas declares: "Now when a sin is committed through certain malice, the movement of sin belongs more

to the will, which is then moved to evil of its own accord, than when a sin is committed through passion, when the will is impelled to sin by something extrinsic, as it were. Therefore a sin is aggravated by the very fact that it is committed through certain malice, and so much the more, as the malice is greater; whereas it is diminished by being committed through passion, and so much the more, as the passion is stronger" (*Summa Theologica*, I-II, Q. 78, Art. 4).

10. Charles S. Singleton, "Symbolism," *Commedia, Elements of Structure*, p. 32.
11. An ambiguous form of retributive justice may be held to mark the situations of the Violent. The centaurs that guard the river of blood, the harpies that infest the wood of suicides, the hounds that chase the reckless Squanderers, and the fire that falls on the Sodomites, Usurers, and Blasphemers might be considered instruments of relation. That retribution should accompany a perpetual living out of the sin itself would not be inappropriate to this transitional region of violence, lying as it does behind the wall and between the divisions of fraud and incontinence. However, the function of none of these agents is purely vindictive. The centaurs, non-violent, pastoral creatures, offer injury to none except those who would break out of the bloody depths to which they have been assigned, and assume a police-like role of enforcing the rules. The harpies, that wound the sensitive branches of those who have fatally wounded themselves, represent in part the irritations that the suicides felt unbearably present in their terrestrial surroundings. Though the hounds pursuing the gamblers are sometimes taken (as by Grandgent) to be allergorical figures for self-induced Death and Ruin, they perhaps also suggest the persons and places, such as gaming parlors or opponents, that the squanderers made into means of self-destruction. Hence these animal or half-animal beings seem to represent the minor players who impinged in various ways on the lives of the violent sinners. The fire, at least as it scorches the sodomites, refers partially to the heat of their lust. Capaneus enunciates a principal in the seventh circle quite different from that of Bertram de Born in the eighth. The blasphemer says, *Qual io fui vivo, tal son morto* ("Such as I was alive, such am I dead"). Virgil adds, *Nullo martiro, fuor che la tua rabbia, / Sarebbe ab tuo furor dolor compito* ("No torment save thine

own rage would be a pain adequate to thy fury") (XIV, 51, 65-66). *Contrapasso* cannot be said unequivocably, if at all, to inform the punishments of the violent and clearly only that of the simple fraudulent.

12. Since less pain is attached to the performing of fraudulent acts than to the committing of lesser sins, one might ask if this implies a defect in the moral scheme of the universe, or of Dante's account of it. The answer would be no if the infernal situations of the fraudulent could be shown to reflect an inevitable part of their earthly experience.

An incident occurs early in the *Inferno* that throws important light upon this question. When Dante the traveller discovers the souls assembled on the shores of the River Acheron awaiting passage into various parts of hell, he asks his guide:

' ...qual costume
Le fa di trapassa parer sì pronte... '

III, 73-74.

"...what rule makes them appear so eager
to pass over..."

Virgil replies:

' E pronti sono a trapassar lo rio,
Chè la divina giustizia li sprona
Sì che la tema si volve in disio '

III, 124-126.

"and they are eager to pass over the stream,
for the divine justice spurs them so that fear is
turned into desire."

It is easy to see that those shades who will reenact their earthly lives are eager to return to familiar and chosen ways. But why should the fraudulent long for a painful retributive punishment? Virgil merely says, vaguely, that "divine justice spurs them," but he does not explain the mechanics of this justice that effects their very desires. Does he refer to some supernatural infusion or to an intelligible psychological process? In attempting to demonstrate the second alternative in a separate discussion (too lengthy to include here and somewhat outside the scope of this paper), we must consider the psychical process

by which guilt might bring about nightmares (the simoniacs, the thieves, the hypocrites, and the false counselors all suffer nightmarish situations rooted in their crimes), or psychosomatic illness (the falsifiers), might induce a person to dwell in filth (the flatterers), might explain an apparently careless or accidental miscalculation (the barrators), or might cause a person unconsciously to wish for actual or metaphorical but painful retaliation (the panders and seducers, diviners, and schismatics). The statement that fear is turned into desire indicates the author's awareness that desire frequently underlies a particular fear, and he knows, with Dostoyevsky, of the sinner's tendency to indulge himself in perpetual and unredemptive self-laceration. From pride or cowardice the criminal ignores the normal social and ecclesiastical means of expiation and reconciliation (contrition, confession, penance), yet an inescapable need for expiation finds perverted expression through these self-induced retaliatory devices, which may reduce anxiety but fail to overcome, and only deepen, his feelings of alienation. If a secret wish-fulfillment is detectable in these retributive punishments, they do then belong to the earthly lives of the sinners, the eagerness for suffering is accounted for, and the principle continues uninterrupted that hell is something that the sinner does to himself.

Alfieri's *Vita*

Giuseppe Velli

[Translations from Italian have become so common today that they are an accepted literary fact in America. The greatest part of these translations are from contemporary and modern authors, but inevitably this interest in the present has tended to resurrect the past as well. Students of Italian literature are once again indebted to Archibald Colquhoun and to the Oxford University Press for the *Oxford Library of Italian Classics* (See I.Q., Vol. V, No. 19, "Items", p. 84) of which Mr. Colquhoun is general editor. It is rewarding and satisfying to see that among the first five volumes issued there is a translation of Alfieri's *Vita* by E.R. Vincent. Perhaps few Italian authors are as little known in the English speaking world as Alfieri, a pity indeed, for Alfieri's writings continue to play a vital role in Italian culture. It seems proper therefore, that some of the general problems relating to Alfieri's work should be considered on the occasion of his *Vita* in English.]

Alfieri wrote his *Vita* in Paris in 1790 at the age of forty-one. We actually have the exact dates of this work, April third to May twentyseventh, and it is to be considered more a task of revision than of composition; this text (which is located in MS 13 among the Alfieri manuscripts in the Laurentian library in Florence) cannot be considered to be a rough draft, but an autonomous and finished one. The real rough draft or, knowing Alfieri's tormented perfectionism, drafts, are to be considered lost. Alfieri later returned to his *Vita* with that constant effort, so typical of his nature, to rework and improve what he had already done and, at the same time, to renew within himself the continuous presence of his past so as to omit nothing, unless it be casual or transient, from a life understood wholly as a mission. He came back to this

work in 1798 and again in 1802: in 1803 his task of revision was completed. This second draft, in his own writing up to chapter 19 of "Epoca" 4, is found in MS 24 of the Alfieri manuscripts in Florence. Having, in this last year, occupied himself with his life up to 1790, he wished to account also for the thirteen years which elapsed between that date and 1803, and he added eleven chapters, preceded by a short introduction, "proemietto." The manuscript of this addition, chapters 20 to 31 of "Epoca" 4, in his own hand, is located in MS 13, while MS 24 contains a copy written by Alfieri's last secretary, Tassi. Luigi Fassò published both drafts in their entirety in a critical edition published in 1951 (2 vols. Asti, Casa d'Alfieri: these are the first two volumes of a critical edition of Alfieri's complete works edited by the Centro Nazionale di Studi Alfieriani). Thus worthy homage was rendered to the work of a man and writer who, in his *Vita,* wished to leave a true image (an image not just factually but ideally true) of himself: an image of his slow, tormented, heroic acquisition of self-knowledge, and of his strenuous career as a free man and tragic author. At the same time this edition was an act of both critical and human comprehension because self expression, for Alfieri, signified control of himself and his passions, a perpetually renovated and never a definitely and peacefully acquired fact. This stylistic insatisfaction of Alfieri's, the struggle with expression which characterizes all his work, is rendered dramatically evident by this critical edition. The formation of his style was really the perpetual thorn in the flesh of our writer as is demonstrated by his tortured manuscripts (which made Foscolo hold them to be more significant than the *Vita* itself) and by innumerable explicit admissions scattered throughout his *Vita* and letters. This problem cannot be resolved exclusively in the formal sphere, but carries us straight into the intimate depth and very art of the author.

My brief introduction should not be taken merely as

an erudite curiosity: it is the necessary preliminary recognition of a substantial component of the art and humanity of Vittorio Alfieri.

What, then, is his *Vita?* Let us first look at the title: not "Confessions" (like Rousseau's), not "Diary," nor "Memoirs" (as E.R. Vincent entitles the recent English translation), but *Life*, with an evident conscious reference to Plutarch's *Lives*, which he read "con un tale trasporto di grida, di pianti, e di furori pur anche, che chi fosse stato a sentir*lo* nella camera vicino *lo* avrebbe certamente tenuto per impazzito" (*Vita*, "Epoca" 3, ch. 7: the passage was greatly revised in the second draft. With that stylistic excess that is the evident goal of the entire revision, Plutarch is only here defined: "il libro dei libri." Among others, in this passage, are added key words of Alfieri's human-poetic mythology, "furori," "rabbia").

Alfieri's *Vita* is certainly a complex, and I would say a composite, work. Its focus, a powerfully vitalizing element, is the severe and unwavering gaze of a man who looks back to his past only to discover in it the premonitory signs of his character (intense passions, indomitable tenacity, love of solitude and freedom, hatred of tyranny) and to observe his own literary development, at first slow and confused, interspersed with uncertainty and failure (nor does the pitiless author spare the latter bitter criticism), and, later, his achievement of total dedication to tragic poetry. The *Vita* is, then, an active representation of what Alfieri means by "libero scrittore."

Moreover the best of Alfierian criticism, from the essay, written with such profound human and ethical participation, by the lamented Luigi Russo(on this essay see the intelligent observations of Raffaello Ramat in the special issue of *Belfagor* in commemoration of the recently deceased scholar, Nov. 1961, pp. 770-772), to the several fine pages of Fubini, clearly expresses this peculiar character of Alfieri's *Vita.* The pre-romantic elements of

the *Vita* which make it (beyond the general, abstractly pedagogical, illuministic theme of the study of man) a new work, harbinger of a different human and artistic sensibility: the capacity of portraying "le zone ombrose della memoria e della coscienza germinale," a tormented feeling of melancholy solitude, indifference and boredom, desperate nomadism, a sensation of the infinite manifesting itself, especially through love for grandiose and deserted landscapes, are already known. Russo himself in 1936 gave, in his essay, a rhapsodic survey of the more properly poetic aspects of the work, separating them, in the fashion of Croce and, in some cases too rigidly, from other elements such as the oratorical and the didactic, including the ensuing mass of details furnished by the author concerning his own literary technique.

To return to that transparent consciousness of himself and of his mission that Alfieri held and that unfolds itself in its entirety in the *Vita*, it seems interesting to note how the former consciously leans upon a renewed feeling for the poetry of Petrarch and, especially, of Dante. We have here an ulterior element for the denial of the anarchy ascribed to Alfieri who, instead, was able to impose upon himself as a man and as a writer, limits and obstacles which enabled him to know and express himself completely. Petrarch teaches him a minute psychological analysis with its implicit lesson of clarity derived from the effort of imposing a form upon his turbid sentimental world. References to "nostro Divino Maestro," to "nostro gran luminare secondo" are numerous in the *Vita*. Alfieri's assiduous study of Petrarch is demonstrated in his *Rhymes*, and direct references are not lacking in his letters (in 1778 he wrote, with his usual good-humoredly self-teasing tone, amply present in the *Vita*, to Lampredi: "Intanto petrarcheggio e piscio sonetti; ma presto mi rimetterò al coturno"). One of the not rare moments of pensive truly poetic abandon, in his *Vita*, portrays the feeling of an

achieved intimacy, human, stylistic, and not externally rhetorical, with our classical tradition:

> Avviatomi alla volta di Piacenza e di Parma, me n'andava *a passo tardo e lento*, ora in biroccio, ora a cavallo, in compagnia de' miei poetini tascabili, con pochissimo altro bagaglio, tre soli cavalli, due uomini, la chitarra (a recent affectation of his), e le molte speranze della futura gloria.
>
> ("Epoca" 4, ch. 2)

Alfieri's reading and study of Dante also resolves itself in an acquisition which is more than merely technical and formal. We know how severe our author was towards purely superficial or surface imitation, how aware of the numberless pitfalls of pedantry (in a letter to Mario Bianchi in 1793, he said: "Ma badi bene che già comincia a oltrepassare un poco il segno nell'imitazione di Dante che è lodevolissima fin qui, e diventa pedanteria se ella si spinge fin lì: e tra il qui e il lì, ci corre alle volte, un capello". Nor can the admonition, "Va, tuona, vinci," addressed by Dante to the poet in the sonnet "*O gran padre Alighier se dal ciel miri*" be forgotten). It seems to me that the entire *Vita* represents a realization of the most profound message of the Dantesque model: the active scornful isolation of the poet prophet. Within the absorbed and tense atmosphere of the *Vita* there are places which have a certain downright Dantesque pose, such as this: "Lasciata dunque in tal modo la mia unica donna, i miei libri, la villa, la pace, e me stesso in Roma, io me n'andava dilungando in atto quasi stupido ed insensato ("Epoca" 4, ch. 10)."

At intervals, in the close framework of a discussion determined by that fundamental note, a discussion now vibrant, now cerebrally didactic, there come moments in which the human condition of the protagonist, poetically transfigured, can be felt, whether he be a reserved and rebellious child, an unsatisfied youth running around

Europe, or a man, already conscious of himself, who yet humbles himself before the "testi di lingua," before Greek and Latin classics. With reference to this last point, a memorable, definitive and famous passage, which engraves itself in the reader's mind: "Fatto il giuramento (of mastering the Tuscan tongue) mi inabissai nel vortice grammatichevole, come già Curzio nella voragine, tutto armato e guardandola" must not let us forget the hidden thread which refrain-like keeps coming to the surface and expresses what might be called the grammatical epos of Alfieri, with the pain and almost human sacrifice it bears. These above mentioned moments are like rays which leave a diffused light on the landscape about them, so that actually very little of the Vita is without their influence. What constitutes their greatest fascination is a certain reserve or shyness, far apart from that abandoned complacency of later, more decadent Romantics. Everyone remembers Alfieri's childhood memories, the fondling and sweets of his uncle, the boy's innocent love for novices: ("or mi si rappresentavano nella fantasia coi loro devoti ceri in mano, servienti la Messa con viso compunto ed angelico, ora coi turiboli incensando l'altare; e tutto assorto in codeste imagini, trascurava i miei studj, ed ogni occupazione, o compagnia mi nojava"); his harpsichord lesson: ("quella note musicali e le lor cinque righe così fitte e parallele mi traballavano davanti alle pupille, ed io dopo quell'ora di lezione mi alzava dal cimbalo che non ci vedeva più, e rimaneva ammalato e stupido per tutto il rimanente del giorno"). Here is Alfieri in Spain:

> Quasi tutta la strada soleva farla a piedi col mio bell'andaluso accanto, che mi accompagnava come un fedelissimo cane, e ce la discorrevamo fra noi due; ed era il mio gran gusto d'essere solo con lui in quei vasti deserti dell'Aragona...
>
> ("Epoca" 3, ch. 12)

In this passage we touch upon that Alfierian sense of nature which some critics (Gaetano Mariani and, in his footsteps, Bruno Maier) have held to be an almost exclusive acquisition of the revised version, while it is already present, and often more poetically expressed, in the first draft. Alfieri himself had at times in correcting, the impression "anzi di scapitare che di migliorare" (*Vita*, "Epoca" 4, ch. 2). On this question there follow two examples which seem to me very conclusive;

First draft

Ed allora in 4 giorni di tempo, con una rapidità incredibile, la durata del Sole su l'orizzonte supplendo alla forza di lui, e soffiando altri venti, sparirono le nevi, ed il gelo interamente, e apparve il verde: spettacolo veramente bizzarro, e poetico; se avessi saputo far versi.

"Epoca" III, ch. VIII, Fassò, vol. II, p. 86

Second draft

ed allora in soli quattro giorni con una rapidità incredibile seguiva il dimoiare d'ogni qualunque gelo, attesa la lunga permanenza del sole su l'orizzonte, e l'efficacia dei venti marittimi; e allo sparir delle nevi accatastate forse in dieci strati l'una su l'altra, compariva la fresca verdura; spettacolo veramente bizzarro, e che mi sarebbe riuscito poetico se avessi saputo far versi.

ibid. Fassò, vol. 1, p. 101

We can immediately tell what has been lost in passing from the first to the second version: that light breath of poetry entrusted to the conciseness of the past absolute, to the delaying effect of the dependent clauses with the gerunds in chiastic position, to the rhythmic balance of the two septenaries: "sparirono le nevi. ed il gelo interamente" so that truly at the end, the sudden "...e apparve il verde" appears as a necessary and, I would say miraculous, crowning point. Here Alfieri had created poetry. His intervention brought about a fragmentation of that unitary breath and a consequent prosastic weightening (notice the useless "accatastate forse in dieci

strati una sull'altra," that insufferable "ogni qualunque gelo"). Here it is easy to see how the wavering, the scruples and the discontent of the writer do not always work toward the achievement of the poetic *optimum*: to use Alfieri's own words, the "lima" has destroyed the "febbre."

First draft

(Arrival in Saint Petersburg) Ed avendo spesso viaggiato il giorno, e la notte, e per essere di questa quasi annullate le tenebre in quel clima a quella stagione, la stanchezza, e il veder sempre luce, in quel piano immenso come il mare, ed arenoso quant'esso, mi avea lasciato nel capo un certo che di confuso, per cui io non sapevo più che dì della settimana, nè che ora del giorno mi fossi.

ibid., Fassò, vol. II, p. 88

Second draft

...e non saprei dire se di giorno vi giungessi o di notte; perchè sendo in quella stagione annullate quasi le tenebre della notte in quel clima tanto boreale, e ritrovandomi assai stanco del non aver per più notti riposato se non se disagiatamente in carrozza, mi si era talmente confuso il capo, ed entrata una tal noja del veder sempre quella trista luce, ch'io non sapea più nè qual dì della settimana, nè qual ora del giorno, nè in qual parte del mondo mi fossi in quel punto.

ibid., Fassò, vol. I, p. 103

The first text emanates an indistinct music which expresses the swaying lullaby of drowsiness, entrusted to the accumulation of *e*'s, "*Ed* avendo spesso viaggiato... *e* per essere... *e* il veder... *ed* arenoso quant'esso": a monotonous lullaby which nevertheless emphasizes the sudden aperture to a landscape barely perceived and almost immense, à la Leopardi. The poet, later, added sentimental elements which are objectively different, "una tal *noja* del veder sempre quella *trista* luce" with the resulting prosaic heaviness, brought in by that wholly practical note of the trip by coach (which corresponds

somewhat to the "nevi accatastate" of the preceding passage).

Many intelligent critics have already dealt with the various problems posed by the two texts of the *Vita*, among them Gaetani, Bigi, Fubini. It is not necessary to discuss here all the aspects of the question and I shall be satisfied to concentrate on an element which, beyond the various fluctuations borne by the text in its passage from the first to the second version, is truly constant and demonstrates both Alfieri's effort to portray in his style the internal contrasts which consumed him and that extremism which characterized his sentimental world.

> Or duro, acerbo, or pieghevol, mite
> Irato sempre, e non maligno mai;
> La mente e il cor meco in perpetua lite:
> Per lo più mesto, e talor lieto assai,
> Or stimandomi Achille, ed or Tersite:
> Uom, se' tu grande, o vil? Muori, e il saprai.

In this manner the poet painted himself in the famous self-portraying sonnet "*Sublime specchio di veraci detti*" (1786). Elsewhere recur the images "gigante" and "nano" coexisting within him (sonnet "*Io mi vo vergognado infra me stesso,*" v. 7; *Vita,* "Epoca" 4, ch. 6). It is also interesting to see how the poet described himself as a child: "Taciturno e placido, per lo più; ma alle volte loquacissimo e vivacissimo; e quasi sempre negli estremi contrarj: ostinato e restio contro la forza; pieghevolissimo agli avvisi amorevoli; rattenuto più che da nessun'altra cosa dal timore d'essere sgridato: suscettibile di vergognarmi fino all'eccesso, e inflessibile se io veniva preso a ritroso." In the same context, the following quotation taken from the treatise *Del principe e delle lettere* (L. 3, ch. 6) wherein is explained what the poet meant by "impulso naturale," the principle which dictates every lofty ideal or action and which is the basis of true and great poetry: "È questo impulso, un bollore di cuore e di mente, per cui

non si trova mai pace, nè loco; una sete insaziabile di ben fare e di gloria; un reputar sempre nulla il già fatto. e tutto il da farsi, senza però mai dal proposito rimuoversi; una infiammata e risoluta voglia e necessità, o di esser primo fra gli ottimi, o di non essere nulla," is a good indication of Alfieri's dynamic, not static, conception of self; thus the overworked figure of antithesis normally emerges to express the moral commitment of the writer. Now in his revision Alfieri has exasperated his writing even formally, in his strenuous search for the definitive, for the breaking point. Exceptional *Vita*, exceptional style. This parallelism is obtained not only by means of the so called Alfierisms, constituting the author's violent intervention on diction, which are, and remain exceptions, nor just by the widespread use of word-symbols (to which I referred above) such as "furore," "rabbia," "ferocemente," "scolpire," "ruggire," either wholly missing from the first text or present only in the form of less powerful synonyms, but by involving to some extent all sectors of the language.

It is meaningful that instead of a normal *entrare* or *cominciare*, *intraprendere*, Alfieri used an extreme *ingolfarsi*; that he substituted for "sempre io spronava il vecchio a partire," "io era lo sprone perpetuo del nostro ajo antico." (realizing in this manner a greater sharpness of expression); that the superlative normally replaces the simple adjective, with results that change considerably the general make-up of Alfieri's writing and call for a determination of its value. We can see that the superlative is certainly effective in passages where the author's poetic or even oratorical inspiration is most vividly present; but it cannot be denied that it can often produce a satiety similar to that of an eternally shouted musical motif.

I have already mentioned the constant swaying of Alfieri's spirit between two opposite extremes, and the antithesis through which that swaying is expressed stylistically. This stylistic device recurs more systematically

in the revision, even in apparently secondary areas: "Bisognò insomma ch'*io mi piegassi moltissimo* (to obtain from the King of Piedmont permission to travel). Ma grazie alla mia buona sorte, questo non mi tolse poi di *rialzarmi in appresso interissimo*" ,Epoca II, ch. X). (There, the very effective isolation of the superlative, obtained by the insertion of "in appresso" between it and the verb should also be noticed.

The entire question of the style and of the language of the *Vita* has recently been extensively debated by Adolfo Jenni (*Convivium*, 1952, pp 481-492) and Mario Fubini (*Lingua Nostra*, 1954, pp. 107-114). Jenni's opinion is that Alfieri was not able to overcome the inner conflict of so much of eighteenth-century Italian prose, torn between its aspirations towards classicism and the appeal of a vivid and familiar style, and that Alfieri carried to extremes the hybrid quality of this prose. Having identified the two large headings (classicistic forms and familiar forms) under which the entire expressive fabric of the *Vita* should be divided, he goes on to a not always clear and disciplined characterization of them. Under stylistic "affectations," he groups phonetic (*instruivamo, omai, etc.*) and morphologic (the superlative of the adverb in *-mente*) phenomena, latinisms, *wortstellung* (inversions, transpositions); under the modern familiar style, general facts (*piuttosto bellina, tante e poi tante diverse cose che non istanno come dovrebbero stare,*" *etc.*), the use of direct address, lexical and syntactical gallicisms,[1] provincial forms (*tosone*, which, Jenni says, probably comes from Piedmontese), tuscanisms, including popular ones (*scamisciati, stroppiava, di molte ore, sendo*: but this gerund was probably taken from the literary tradition), anacolutha. Our critic says that Alfieri does not succeed in harmonizing these two different aspects and the result is a "hybrid, not harmonized mixture, in every page, in every paragraph." He even goes further to affirm that the culture of Alfieri, a self-taught man,

was always limited and that he never succeeded in having a "truly instinctive and fluent command" of the Italian language. This last statement is, to say the least, an oversimplification which does not take into consideration the linguistic conditions of the eighteenth century (which made Devoto speak of "nuovo bilinguismo") and of the dynamic and at times dramatic (as Alfieri himself shows) relationship between the author and the literary tradition, between the autor and the contemporary linguistic community (see the fine chapter on the eighteenth century in the monumental "Storia della lingua italiana" of Bruno Migliorini). Alfieri, finally, by correcting constantly in an aulic direction, has increased the gravity of what Jenni considers to be the central defect of the *Vita*, its composite tone, thus forgetting (insists the critic) the rules of the literary genre (autobiography should have a smooth and discursive style). Yet, Jenni, at the end of his examination, makes some concessions: "with this I don't mean that (the first draft) is more vivid. On the contrary it is less colorful and picturesque. The final text appears genial and personal thanks to those which can be considered its very ' defects '."

But can one speak of "defects," asks Fubini in a polemic tone, when the stylistic necessity (within the style of Alfieri, not in reference to an abtract linguistic reality) of these corrections has been determined? And here, in a concrete and very acute examination of certain stylistic variations of Alfieri, (in particular of the preference manifested in the revision for placing adjectives and adjectival participles in front of nouns) Fubini answers, it seems to me satisfactorily, Jenni's formal and external objections. For this usage is not a vain rhetorical device, but an expression of the particular synthetic style proper to the *Vita* in direct agreement with the intimate tension and the epigrammatic taste of the author. "Is it possible," asks the critic, and the implicit answer is here of fundamental theoretical importance,

"to judge the fitness of this or that rhetorical device, without considering the style of the work as a whole?"

Giacomo Devoto's opinion concerning the Jenni-Fubini debate is interesting. In an important theoretical contribution,[2] entitled "Il testo come fine e il testo come mezzo," among the examples chosen to illustrate the problem of the "existence of stylistic traditions, already established before the authors but surviving at times as disharmonic residues in them," he also uses Alfieri's *Vita*. Devoto believes that both critics, Jenni and Fubini, are right, but on two different planes of thought. Jenni's position is legitimate in that it recognized in the *Vita* an aspect which is irregular, disorderly, of little linguistic sensibility, that can be traced back to the eighteenth century situation. He justifies, however, Fubini's reaction to Jenni's attempt to make his own recognition an esthetic judgment. On the other hand, concludes Devoto, "the unity of esthetic interpretation must not be projected on obviously varying stylistic forms to nullify them."

NOTES

1. For Jenni the numerous *io* of the *Vita* are due perhaps not so much to egocentrism as to a direct influence of French. I am inclined to consider the phenomenon an element of poetics, because of the tendency to add the pronoun in the revision and because of an observation of Alfieri himself in his letter to Calsabigi.
2. Read at the very recent meeting of *Studi di filologia italiana* in Bologna to celebrate the Centenary of the *Commissione per i testi di lingua* and published in *Studi e problemi di critica testuale*, Bologna, 1961, pp. 3-15.

Ungaretti's Poetry from Evocation to Invocation

GLAUCO CAMBON

[The fundamental role of Ungaretti's works in the development of 20th-century Italian poetry is now firmly established. Professor Cambon's analysis of Ungaretti's personal technique and poetic procedure helps to confirm his importance in modern Italian letters.]

These unscholarly comments are offered in the hope that a renewed conversation with an elusive poet will yield something more than a private experience. They are meant as unobtrusive footnotes, the result of some intimate reading; and the fact that they center on two poems need not limit whatever relevance they may have, if the poems chosen are representative enough. Ungaretti has been getting a responsive audience in the United States thanks to the efforts of Allen Mandelbaum, Sergio Pacifici, and John Frederick Nims (whose analysis of certain focal poems has now appeared in an anthology of modern European poetry, *The Poem Itself*, edited by Stanley Burnshaw). As this growing audience familiarizes itself with more of the Italian writer's achievement, it will recognize, I hope, how his dominant value is to be found in the quality itself of the *voice*.

The wartime poems of *L'Allegria*, dating from more than forty years ago, modulate this voice in its simplest form, as a *naming* of things which is at the same time an acknowledgment of existence, of its mystery and stark "givenness." They are generally statements of the human condition made in wonder and awe. Thus *I Fiumi* develops as a reiterated recognition of elemental reality in its intimate relation to the speaker: "This is the

Isonzo... These are my rivers... This is the Serchio... This is the Nile... This is the Seine... This is my homesickness..." And *Veglia* confronts the brute fact of death along with the brute fact of life: "I have never been so attached to life." *Distacco,* as a piece of self-revelation, applies the same mood to the poet, who is here presented not as the exceptional sufferer, the lonely genius, but as the typical sharer of uniformed anonymity in World War I trenches and towns: "Eccovi un uomo uniforme... Eccovi un'anima deserta..." With the same "detachment," the voice of the poet can realize itself elsewhere as a cry lost in the cosmos, "sinking in dismay" in the "dim bell" (*campana fioca*) of the sky.

This is the dawning form of *vocation* or *calling*: the poet cast into exile and war *calls* created things and resigns himself to their protection, even to their indifference since it is a guaranty of reality, of indestructibility. Or we should say, rather, that he *names* them as a kind of reassurance. "The things exist, therefore I exist." The *calling,* a silent one, comes from the things themselves; and such a mood continues with notable deepening into the *Sentimento del tempo* collection, which marked, in the early thirties, Ungaretti's "hermetic" evolution. He contemplates things, or listens to them, in a posture of wonder: "Foglie, sorelle foglie, / Vi ascolto nel lamento" (Leaves, my sisters, leaves, / I listen to you in your lamentation). *O Notte,* from which these lines are taken, is a pure utterance of wonder, characteristically hesitating this side of full articulation: it consists almost entirely of verbless exclamations, muted, inward, culminating in the sunrise of consciousness with that pivotal verb *Vi ascolto* (I listen to you). Elemental stupor begets myth, as so often happens in Emily Dickinson, and then we have a thing like *Nascita d'aurora* (Birth of Sunrise), where pure perception shapes an evanescent, inchoate goddess. But the intentness of contemplation and listening gradually shifts the focus

from the presence of things to their absence; and then the mode of vocation becomes one of evocation. The poet is "illumined with immensity," and "listens to a dove of other deluges" ("D'altri diluvi una colomba ascolto"). One is always struck in Ungaretti by the periodical return to elemental utterance on the threshold of the inarticulate. This movement is balanced, though, by the development of regular rhythms (the hendecasyllable of Italian tradition) and closed sentences in the Petrarch-Góngora style. But our poet does really *borrow* them: he evolves them out of his own experience of first beginnings. The voice recapitulates a history of the language.

The moment of evocation, turning inward, makes for greater self-consciousness, with some attendant complications. We have a "hermetic" closure, an attempt at self-sufficient magic, perhaps. The poet really speaks to himself, like Valéry's Narcisse or Jeune Parque. But this is not necessarily a solution, or a happy stance. The "shepherd" of *Isola*, a figure of the poet, "wanders from the state of a simulacrum to that of a true flame" and thus "lands" on a shore of perennial verdure: the paradise regained of pure poetry. In *Alla Noia*, in contrast, there is a posture of torment, for this is not enough; the sustaining certitude of elemental things has withdrawn, and the poet struggles with his own phantoms as a dissatisfied magician. The state of mind is far more complex, utterly unstable, and the verbal medium is correspondingly denser. No longer able to "recognize himself a docile fiber of the universe", as he had in *I Fiumi* under the stress of the war experience, the poet here is plunged into a darker "river", of elusive mental appearances, and finds himself threatened by another kind of death than bullets give: the chaos of mind. Therefore, the relatively easy immediacy of *L'Allegria* yields to the striving for an immediate transcendental perception that again reminds one of Emily Dickinson

(no "influence" involved). The explorative thrust of language generates a world from the inside. In this poem, like so many others of *Sentimento del tempo*, the world is not given any more: it happens.

In this way the manifestations of physical nature become functions of the mind in its effort to know itself and to establish a cosmos of its own. The only limit is God—a formidable challenger, to be sure. The obscurity with which *Alla Noia*, for instance, confronts the reader is justified by depth of striven-for insight; it is, if anything, a uniquely lucid obscurity, a transparency of a new kind, as of eyes opened on submarine abysses, or of cleft carbuncle. We have here a phenomenology of existence as an unknowable that endeavors to know itself.

To begin with, the very title (and subject) is a trap for the unwary. *Noia*, as a familiar feeling that ranges all the way from weariness to dissatisfation and disgust, generally finds its English equivalent in "boredom" or "tedium". But here the case is altogether different; and it might help to remember that Leopardi considered "la noia," in his *Operette morali* (67-68), a rare feeling, indeed "the most sublime of human feelings". Common boredom is now a shallow feeling, to be sure, the reciprocal of "distraction" and amusement; it can hardly claim the kind of interest displayed here by a keen poetical mind. Tedium, even if it rises (or descends) to the finality of *taedium vitae*, is a heavier thing, and far more static, than the poem implies in its lively oscillations. So *ennui*, with its exotic flavor, would seem to do least injustice to the poet's intention—short of retaining his native term. His Parisian connections count for something here, and they certainly go back to Baudelaire, an authority on ennui and "spleen". The Anglo-Saxon reader may get a clearer grasp of the poem if he thinks of Robert Burton—after, all, this poem is an "anatomy of melancholy."

That the poet personifies this negative mood in a

seductive, unseizable nymph, is to be accepted as a legitimate surprise. Not because poetry needs external reference or erudite ancestry, but because the human mind is no windowless monad, is it useful again to bring De Quincey into the picture, with his personal myths of mind-goddesses. We are moving in a rarefied atmosphere, and the poem wings its way through it in an effort to capture the tantalizing goddess. Between sleep and waking, between memory and oblivion, between desire and satiety, she has her being; and her kiss is fatal, as line 22 finally declares. If we cast our glance deeper, we shall see that ennui stands for the consummation of experience never to be attained or if attained then deadly as total disappointment can be.

The movement of the poem gives us the sharp waverings of the soul between these poles, coming to a head in the resolving contradiction of lines 21-22 (May I desire your lips again... / May I never know them any more!). So much happens actually between the lines that the blank space of a pause conceals the propulsive force of the poem (and this is even truer of a composition like *La Pietà*). Another dramatic gesture of contradiction within the poem is the identification of ennui, *Noia,* with memory itself (lines 14 ff.: "Memory, fluid semblance, / Melancholy mockery, / Darkness of blood...") after the two had been set up as quarry and pursuer. A subtle interplay of sound arises between *memoria* (line 10) *mormorio* (murmur, line 12), *remoti* (13), *simulacro* (simulacrum, semblance, line 14) and *melanconico* (15), the key-word for the mentioned identification. Likewise, *labbra* (lips) and *brami* (desire, line 21): a tactile effect of particular relevance at the end of the poem, where they occur.

If we pass on from *Alla Noia* to *La Pietà,* the most sustained piece of *Sentimento del tempo,* we see Ungaretti taking stock of himself in a climax of religious

anguish which marks or preludes the reversion to a more directly dramatic language. This is to be found in the 1948 collection *Il Dolore*, which arises from private bereavement (the loss of a child in Brazil) and from human concern with the tragedy of a second world war. In the early fifties, *La terra promessa* will resume the metaphysical introspection with perhaps some Gongorist mannerism, of *Sentimento del tempo*. But *La Pietà* is a remarkable utterance of the extended type, with its unanswered appeal to an absent God. The poet disclaims the value of words and rejects the very suffering they cost him (lines 10 through 13), and recites a "mea culpa" in a language of naked confession, despair and prayer; obliquity is discarded. Elsewhere, as in *Memoria d'Ofelia d'Alba* (from the same book), he had apparently set great store by his aesthetics as an eternizing power: "And in you immortal / The things which among premature doubts / You followed burning at their changes, / Seek peace, / And shortly at the bottom of your silence / They will stop, / Things consummated; / Eternal emblems, names, / Pure evocations..."

"Evocations" is the keyword, of course. But now he looks at the other side of the coin, and resents or fears the unreality of the fictive world he has created as an artist. He "reigns over phantoms", he is walled in in the solitude of mind and flesh; art is a spider web, like everything man does (line 69), and it precariously hovers over the void (line 68). Unlike d'Annunzio, who was so intoxicated with his creative power as to proclaim that "the Word is all" (*Il Verbo è tutto*), and like Rilke, who declared himself "afraid of the word of men" because it petrified reality, the human creator despairs of his strength in facing the hidden Creator. As a craftsman of the word he had pride (line 6) and could delight in such verbal harmonies as those which open *O Notte* ("Dall'ampia ansia dell'alba / Svelata alberatura..."); but that only meant to be a magician conjuring shadows, and to

feel the ordeal of isolation among one's fellow men (lines 5 through 8; compare *Alla Noia*). Now that was a predicament well known to Tonio Kröger, who was resigned to it and found in the fulfilment of his mission as an artist a way to save himself and to bridge the chasm of solitude that separated him from his simpler fellow townsmen. But the solution of the humanist seems unacceptable to the Christian man yearning to found his existence upon the absolute of an unfailing Life.

He is like Kierkegaard, who must discard the aesthetic phase of self-realization and die as Don Juan to be reborn as Abraham, the Knight of Faith. Isaac would be here the poet's own work and his very hope of immortality; he saves it only by offering it to God in a supreme sacrifice; it is his dearest creature at this point. He does not know yet that a more literal Isaac, his little child, will be offered on the altar of death—and resurrected in the best poem of *Il Dolore*. That will come later in life; meanwhile, he yearns for a breakthrough from the very prison of mind and art, vanity of vanity, just because that is his dearest possession and only that will be acceptable to God. One unavoidably thinks of Dante's ordeal through Purgatory, and of his self-humiliation as an artist in Canto XI, when he makes a miniaturist, Oderisi da Gubbio, say that human glory is only a wind.

There is no hypocritical unction in these acts. The tone of authenticity is unmistakable and retains its force of conviction even for those readers who do not share the Christian belief, or a belief in any God. The poet brings his torment to an acme by positing the possibility that God is a mere fiction of the human imagination, a dream (lines 50 through 55). And he never introduces a positive reply on the part of the passionately addressed Divinity; the whole thing is a dramatic monologue, with self-questioning followed by self-answering and new self-questioning, and God's own answer, if any, is to be seen

in the blank spaces between anguished address and statement. Pauses are always important in Ungaretti, and John Ciardi should keep him in mind when discussing the "silences in the poem"; here they are supremely functional indeed. They are the objective correlative of God's silence as an answer to modern man. And the direct quality of the diction parallels that of Jacopone da Todi in his Passion dialogue—only that this is a monologue. The prison of self is not demolished; the breakthrough remains an aspiration. From the uncertain pleasures of *evocation*, culminating in elusive visions like *Alla Noia*, the poet has passed on to the agony of *invocation*. The former is a magically powerful voice, the latter a powerless and despairing one; God is mercy (*pietà*) and then cruelty (line 32). The frantic gesture of alienation is balanced by the total effect of composure through repetition, oratorio-like; and the last part gives up the questioning tone to sink into objective statement, however tense. In the beginning the artist thinks of himself; then he identifies with the human condition as a whole. His *vocation* is paradoxically confirmed because he denies it; it is a self-crucifixion which brings the *voice* to its highest intensity. The initial whisper, the dawning self-recognition, was the calling; now it had modulated into a prolonged cry. Broken or sustained, it is, however, still the same voice. And what it has given us throughout, as the reader of *Vita d'un uomo* will see, is the *grandeur et misère* of modern poetry itself, as a direct expression of an age of crisis. From this impasse, Valéry tried to escape in the *Cimetière Marin* with an appeal to life: "il faut tenter de vivre"; Rilke, in the *Duineser Elegien*, cried out to the cryptic Angel, and found his answer in the vision of death; Eliot, in the *Quartets*, strove to redeem time by achieving an intersection of history with the timeless; others, like Eluard, Aragon or Quasimodo, endeavored to break through to an inspiring political faith (Auden and Spender had anticipated them before

the last war). Ungaretti offers his own human defencelessness in a faith beyond faith; he has the prayer, not the assurance. And without any explicit ideological commitment, he does speak for man, not just for himself as an artist. Thus, an important breakthrough has been scored, in strictly poetical terms, yet such that no ivory tower can be said to obstruct human communion. Invocation is the logical response to vocation, or better, its final form.

Trends

The latest Manzoni

Three times during the past two years has Manzoni appeared, in rather garish dress, before Italy's most numerous reading public: the readers of the illustrated weeklies. Once it was as the result of Giovanni Getto's discovery of an unsuspected source of *I Promessi Sposi*. A second time, it was in the wake of Moravia's unconventional and intentionally shocking introduction to a new edition of that same work. And finally, there is the scandal provoked by Mario Mazzuchelli's historical study, *La Monaca di Monza*, undertaken with the approval of the Archbishop of Milan and now under prosecution for obscenity. Amazing developments in the history of the reputation of a writer whose dominating feature, both in his life and in his works, has often been defined as absolute reserve.

In the summary of Italian cultural events which is part of the 1961 issue of the *Almanacco Letterario Bompiani*, Lanfranco Caretti identifies the outstanding cultural event of the year as the "new return" to Manzoni. This return, he states, is related to the sharpened awareness of the novel as a genre with its own special problems: problems of language and style, technical problems of narration, the problem of the interplay of truth and invention. All areas, Caretti might have added, to which Manzoni, author of Italy's "first" novel, had turned over a century ago and on which he wrote much quoted and much analyzed pages. Topical and timely, the "return" to Manzoni is thus merely a continued, though this time resounding, commentary upon his work.

Indeed, if we consider the three works mentioned above more closely, we note that each reflects a distinct and different problem of Manzoni criticism. Getto ("Echi di un romanzo barocco nei *Promessi Sposi*," *Lettere Italiane*, XII, 2, pp. 141-167) analyzes points of contact between a forgotten seventeenth century novel, Pace Pasini's *Historia del Cavalier Perduto*, and Manzoni's masterpiece. The similarities are striking. There is the story of a kidnapping: the gentlewoman Luciana (Lucia's name may well be an echo) is carried off to the castle of the terrible Strappacuori. There is the description of a flight which bears some resemblance to Renzo's. There are evil men who repent. There are disguises, cries for help, moonlit nights. A series of details, Getto correctly calls them, but sufficient to permit him to hazard the hypothesis that here at last is the anonymous manuscript Manzoni so often refers to. Getto's study may be deemed marginal when placed beside works which move to the very center of Manzoni's art, but it adds a piquant element of its own. Manzoni, the satirist and castigator of the customs of the Seicento, is seen here almost as a continuator of an art form of that century. The general favor which has of late invested the Baroque has thus suggested a new perspective from which Manzoni's work can be viewed.

While Getto belongs to the most solid of Manzoni's academic critics, Mario Mazzuchelli's interest in the author is tangential. By profession a lawyer, by avocation a writer, Mazzuchelli already has a number of biographies to his credit. It need not surprise us that he should have wanted to add the figure of the tormented nun of Monza to his gallery. Not only is Mazzucchelli the biographer of unusual women (his present book has been published as part of a series entitled "Donne Celebri," Milano, Dall'Oglio, 1961), he is also a Lombard and as such attached by strong bonds to the land of Manzoni. Moreover, as a lawyer, the legal aspects of the case were

bound to interest him. The best pages of the book are, in fact, those devoted to a discussion of the canon law of the times in its application to criminal offenses (pp. 177-183). Mazzucchelli's "Monaca di Monza" is therefore, to put it briefly, not Gertrude, but Suor Virginia Maria de Leyva, daughter of one of Spain's first families. Mention of Manzoni is incidental and, as always when the historian marshals facts, the novelist is called to task. Suor Virginia Maria de Leyva's crimes were committed between 1597 and 1608; Manzoni, for all his purported and historical accuracy, has Gertrude's occur between November 1628 and October 1630. How did this happen? Mazzucchelli asks. The answer is simple. Although Manzoni did see the documents that Mazzucchelli himself, by special favour of Cardinal Montini, Archbishop of Milan, also had access to, his only source for the episode of the Monaca di Monza was actually Ripamonti, where there is no mention of dates. The file of the legal proceedings, which, by his own admission, lay on Manzoni's desk for many months, did not reach him until shortly before the 1840 edition of *I Promessi Sposi.* At that time the important structural changes between *Fermo e Lucia* and *I Promessi Sposi* had already been made and the story of Gertrude had received its definitive form. Or, as Zottoli puts it so well (*Umili e potenti nella poetica del Manzoni*, 2nd ed., Rome, Tumminelli, 1942, pp. 78-79), Manzoni had already "discovered" and "revealed" what had "really" happened, and the historical characters he had "invented" (of which Gertrude is one) could no longer be influenced by the inconsequential truth of historical facts.

But if Mazzucchelli's contribution to Manzoni studies proper is minimal (the poet's magnificent psychological reconstruction is completely forgotten in the sordid details of assignations, popular superstitions, murders, and lies), he did bring the novel's most controversial episode before the public's eye once more.

In this he was no doubt aided by the almost simultaneous publication of Raffaello Maggi's *La monaca di Monza all'esame psicanalitico* (Milano, Giuffré, 1961). The latter is a curious work, a clinical study of Suor Virginia Maria de Leyva conducted according to a variety of methods, almost as though to sample and illustrate them. But here, too, the figure of Gertrude is again and again submerged, this time in language so precise and technical that any reader not conversant with medical literature is apt to be conclusively discouraged.

Were it not for the devouring avidity of the contemporary reading public, Getto's discovery might well have remained relegated to the province of the literary historian, Mazzucchelli's "biography" might have aroused the prurient curiosity of an occasional reader, and Maggi's study would at best have been published as a scientific work for a limited audience. The case of Moravia's introduction, in literary terms the most resounding one of all, is somewhat different. For, if in publishing a deluxe edition of *I Promessi Sposi*, with original drawings by Renato Guttuso, Einaudi was no doubt thinking of a newly prosperous public more inclined to purchase books than read them (similarly, *La monaca di Monza* is bound in elegant *écru* with gold relief, while *La monaca di Monza all'esame psicanalitico* appears in pearl gray), Moravia's interest in his great predecessor is hard to dismiss as a mere speculation on the public taste.

Theoretically speaking, Moravia's remarks on Manzoni can be judged from two fundamental points of view. The first has to do with the novelist Moravia reading the work of another novelist, and consciously or not, revealing his own ideas on the art of writing. The second, and the more normal, approach to a critical essay is to ask: What does this particular reading of Manzoni contribute to our understanding of his art? What is its place in the history of Manzoni criticism? But there is

a third point of view, as well, and that is to forget for the moment both the novelist Moravia and the tradition of Manzoni criticism, and to ask instead: What does, or can, a contemporary Italian intellectual, not a professional novelist nor a professional critic or literary historian, but, say, a reader of *L'Espresso*, think of *I Promessi Sposi?* It is the approach that Moravia himself suggests when he connects the idea of totalitarian propaganda techniques with what may appear to the contemporary reader as the most startling aspect of *I Promessi Sposi*: the predominance of the religious theme.

> Today poetry is running the gravest risk it has ever run. Totalitarianism is no longer content to ask merely for good oratory, it asks for poetry. But Manzoni, with his masterpiece, has shown, involuntarily if you wish, that antihistorical totalitarianism can produce only propaganda art, and that propaganda art, being of necessity untrue to historical reality, is not poetry.

It is not essential to our present purpose to analyse Moravia's point of view further and to define his terminology more precisely. For Moravia is not interested in whether or not *I Promessi Sposi* can actually, within the total framework of Manzoni's work and culture, be called a work of religious propaganda. He makes one reference to Croce's distinction between Manzoni, the poet, and Manzoni, the orator, but does not pursue the matter. He simply postulates the fact that *I Promessi Sposi* is a work of religious propaganda and that its shortcomings are those of its type. For it is a question of type, or genre, or literary movement, if we wish. To describe the art of *I Promessi Sposi* Moravia coins the phrase "Catholic realism," a hypothetical pendant to "Socialist realism," a kind of literature whose actual existence is generally recognized.

By creation of this designation, Moravia has broken through the traditional respect and laudatory tone with which the figure of Manzoni has usually been surrounded. And in doing so, he has made *I Promessi Sposi* actual. Actual, not as we have indicated earlier, in the sense that Manzoni may have a solution to offer to the problems that beset the contemporary novelist. But actual in the sense that his novel "reflects an Italy, which with some unimportant variations, could be the Italy of today." Of course, this generalization, as all broad statements, is specious and uncritical. Just as the identification of Catholic authoritarianism with contemporary totalitarianism is at best glibly facile. And just as calling Don Abbondio "the perfect incarnation of a particular kind of particular Italian corruption... the corruption of fear" is a flippant way (however true the statement may be) to *épater le bourgeois*. But Moravia knows the effectiveness of paradox and he knows that social problems appeal to a wider public than do literary ones. In his introduction, he has therefore chosen to speak in a role which is congenial to him, as a present-day social *moraliste* who does not disdain to make use of a showman's repertoire.

Surely he must have been the first to be surprised when he found his essay carefully analyzed and learnedly refuted in weighty scholarly journals, such as the *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana, Lettere italiane*, and the *Rassegna della letteratura italiana*. In the latter (January-April 1961, pp. 119-133), Moravia's introduction is reviewed by Alberto Asor Rosa in the very same article in which Rosa also discusses Natalino Sapegno's introduction to yet another 1960 edition of *I Promessi Sposi*, the one brought out by Feltrinelli in its collection "Universale Economica." Only an accident of chronology could have permitted mention of these two essays in one and the same breath. Moravia's analysis of *I Promessi Sposi*, Rosa himself says, is no more than "a *summa* of

current objections to Manzoni... devoid of any historical sense whatsoever." As a matter of fact, Moravia goes so far as to criticize Manzoni for having written a historical novel rather than a contemporary one, and he anachronistically compares him, in this respect, with Flaubert and Tolstoy. Sapegno's studies on Manzoni, on the other hand, are born, to quote Rosa again, "of the desire to study the problem in its historical dimension... His work is the most organic and unified to have been devoted to Manzoni by Italian criticism in the post-war period."

In his introduction to *I Promessi Sposi*, the most recent of his writings on Manzoni, Sapegno starts out by reconstructing the moment at which the idea of composing a historical novel first occured to Manzoni. Thus, he implicitly declares that to speak of *I Promessi Sposi* without referring to a precise historical setting is methodologically unsound. Comparing his objective with that of other critics who "in recent years" have reduced the "genuinely poetic nature" of *I Promessi Sposi* to "oratorical persuasion and ideological propaganda," Sapegno adds:

> To understand the complexity of a work in which poetic instinct concurs with a rich fermenting of ideas... it will be necessary to refer its contents and its modes of expression to the political and intellectual evolution of Italy and of Europe in the years which go from the Enlightenment to the Restoration after the Congress of Vienna. This is the only way to measure objectively, following the scheme of a biography concerned with essentials and not with anecdotes, what were the actual innovations and the limitations inherent in the concrete conditions of that time and that milieu.

Sapegno sees Manzoni against the background of the Milanese intellectual milieu in the first period of Romanticism. He studies *I Promessi Sposi* in its relation to Manzoni's minor works. He recognizes clearly and

states objectively what constituted and continues to constitute Manzoni's originality. And all this, without pedantic insistence and without polemic redundance, in the quiet tone of self-assured authority. Of course, the initiated reader will espy the hidden opponent beyond the person (the average reader) whom Sapegno is ostensibly addressing. So that reading Sapegno's introduction immediately after Moravia's, for instance, affords a certain kind of voyeur-like pleasure. For without belaboring the point, Sapegno is actually engaged in a conversation apropos Manzoni and not in an explication. His essay, as a consequence, is rich in cogent, quotable passages which seem to settle once and for all problems which have preoccupied the Manzoni specialist for years.

Of course, these problems may seem insignificant to the layman. As they may seem equally insignificant to the thousands of student readers added each year to the Manzoni public, who accept sheepishly the particular reading (i.e., annotated edition) of the masterpiece which is set before them. Few, a mere handful, of these readers will ever return to *I Promessi Sposi* with adult eyes, and even fewer will be consciously aware that a *prise de position* with regard to Manzoni is in essence a *prise de position* with regard to wide areas of Italian culture and civilization. For Manzoni is not, by any stretch of the imagination, what was so popular a few years ago, a poet's poet. Even in his most "literary" pursuit, the choice of a language in which to clothe the creatures of his imagination, he measured himself and his art against the socio-political reality about him. And his religion, another possible discriminant, bears no traces of individualistic mysticism, but is the practical religion, the morality, of men who live in the society of other men. The shortcomings of his work, then, if we wish to call them so, are the shortcomings of the society in which he lived. But as Sapegno warns, "It is absurd, and more

precisely antihistorical, to select as a criterium for literary judgement the insufficiencies and the weaknesses of our bourgeois national revolution," that is, of the *Risorgimento*.

The confusion between these two points of view and the difficulty encountered in judging Manzoni on a purely literary basis, is further reflected in yet another problem in Manzoni criticism. This, in broad terms, deals with the place his work occupies in world literature; in a more limited frame of reference, with its general lack of resonance abroad. But it would hardly be warranted to return to the stale discussion of why a number of great Italian writers, especially of the nineteenth century, have not met with success outside of Italy, if it were not that echoes of the discussion have crept into some of the latest writing on Manzoni. Archibald Colquhoun's translation of *I Promessi Sposi* into English, for instance, was hailed by Riccardo Bacchelli in his introduction to the 1953 edition of Manzoni's *Opere* (reprinted in *Leopardi e Manzoni. Commenti Letterari*, Mondadori, 1960) as an added proof of the final consecration of Manzoni's masterpiece as a classic. Lanfranco Caretti in yet another introduction to still another edition of Manzoni's *Opere* (Milano, Mursia; pre-published in *Paragone*, April 1961) finds in Manzoni's present success abroad, "even in Anglo-Saxon countries," corroborating evidence of a particularly propitious season of Manzoni studies.

But these are external considerations which do not reach to the heart of the matter. Whatever limited success *I Promessi Sposi* may be reaping outside of Italy today (mention should also be made of a new French translation by Armand Monjo, Paris, Club de Amis du Livre Progressiste, 1960), there can be no doubt that this Italian masterpiece has never been rated on a par with the great novels of the nineteenth century. As a matter of fact, though Italian narrative literature of the nineteenth century bore the heavy imprint of its model

(as late as 1876 De Marchi's *Il signor dottorino* opens with a description of Lake Como in unmistakable Manzonian cadences and idiom), it eventually turned elsewhere for the life blood which was to renew and revitalize it. Though Verga began as a historical novelist (and it is important to remember a fact like this, for, in history, continuity is at least as determining as innovation), the writings which made him famous are inconceivable without the background of theoretical discussions and creative works which revolved about the figure of Zola. And this is but one example of many which might be cited. Italian critics today — militant and academic — insist on the "lesson of Manzoni." They forget to add that this lesson is only being learned now (for Manzoni's early imitators clung to its letter and not its spirit) and that it is being learned in the perspective of literary experiences which were far from being purely Italian. In an essay published in 1926 (*Alessandro Manzoni e gli storici liberali francesi della restaurazione*, Bari, Laterza), Cesare De Lollis seems at one point to abandon his subject and to walk with Manzoni "into the desert of Jansenist pessimism" (p. 163). There follow some of the densest, most magnificent pages ever written on a comparative subject: Emma Bovary casts her shadow over Manzoni's Gertrude and the figure of the Monaca di Monza stands revealed in all its complexity. "It would be foolish of me, or worse," De Lollis interjects, "to suggest that if Manzoni had made of the story of the Monaca di Monza not an episode but the whole novel, *I Promessi Sposi* would have been a better book. But I would be correct in saying that that book might perhaps have won the wide public it did not win, in spite of being a masterpiece."

Moravia echoes speculations such as these in his insistence on a "decadent" Manzoni. Sapegno rejects them in his refusal to accept as valid any psychological or "modern" reading of texts of the past. Bacchelli points to the tragic, lyric element in Manzoni's realism. Caretti sees

Manzoni's accomplishment as the constant linking of ideological content with artistic form. There are almost as many Manzonis as there are readers, although dominant themes occur and reoccur and are arranged and rearranged in endless variations. It is no wonder that, as we have pointed out at the beginning, popularization should have its place in all this activity. And it is not without significance perhaps that an Italian public of mass readers should currently be kept informed of facts and insights which concern Manzoni. It was he, after all, who gave them their first popular novel.

Olga Ragusa

BENEDETTO CROCE, PHILOSOPHER OF ART AND LITERARY CRITIC

An Italian reader's first reaction to Orsini's book (Gian N. G. Orsini, *Benedetto Croce, Philosopher of Art and Literary Critic*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1961, 379 pp.) is to try to integrate into a more familiar frame of reference the examples, almost exclusively from the American cultural debate, that are chosen to illustrate this or that phase of Croce's thought. Thus in connection with the contrast between poetic intuition of reality and historical judgment cited on page 38. I can not help recalling the words Croce himself wrote in the *Quaderni della Critica* against those who, like the Italian philosopher Ugo Spirito, placed art and history on the same plane, as equally incapable of attaining an absolute; nor can the objections cited by the author to the use of Croce's term "intuition," so vague for American critics, fail to bring to mind similar accusations refuted within Croce's milieu in Italy by Luigi Russo for example, on page 162 of the first edition of his *Problemi di Metodo Critico*. Does this mean there is a deficiency or partiality in the documentation of this book? Are we authorized to state that having once admitted the importance played by debate in the development of Croce's thought, the author did not wish to carry his idea through to its widest consequences? The most obvious and superficial answer to this question would be to say that the book is conceived with the aim of clarifying the most important principles of Croce's esthetics and criticism for an audience acquainted with them through the distortions of hearsay rather than direct knowledge of the texts. Nor is it excluded that Orsini honestly and modestly felt this to be the case. However that may be, it is not possible today to write a book of diffusion about Croce. One can only write either a superficial, useless book, or else a necessary book through which the experience of Croce's esthetic thought is re-lived and re-elaborated. And since in my opinion Orsini's book belongs to this second category, the partiality of the documentation would seem to

have its own intrinsic justification and persuasive force. The task of inserting Croce's esthetic thought into a tradition different from that which created it, is attainable only to the extent that he who proposes it is capable of assimilating that different tradition. Orsini, re-living Croce's development within the framework of American culture, precisely by dint of the concreteness of his point of view, has succeeded in writing a necessary book that is compact and yet full of complex truths as valuable for the Italian scholar as for the American critic. If the American critic can find here a strong adherence to the cultural situation in which he habitually works, the Italian scholar can not fail to profit by Orsini's guidance and extract from the book material for meditation concerning the problems so often debated yet so little understood of the degree to which Croce's thought is known or unknown outside of Italy.

Some years ago (*Belfagor*, VI, n. 4, July 1951). I had occasion to discuss the judgment of an Italian critic, Giovanni Macchia, who stated that the line Saint-Beuve - de Lollis, together with occasional criticism in the literary reviews, is as important for Italian critics of French literature as Croce's thought. Certainly it seems evident that Croce's influence in Italy itself has been far greater on critics of Italian literature than on the critics primarily concerned with foreign literatures. It is understandable that the critic of a foreign literature would succumb to the fascination of the trends of the country that attracts his interest; it is more difficult to find the reason why certain countries seal themselves off from reciprocal cultural influences, why France even today is closed to Croce.

Orsini cites (p. 7) the barriers created by Fascism, as a result of which at a certain moment Croce continued to follow and discuss the culture of the democratic countries while they in turn could not or would not follow the development of his culture. This situation is attentively studied by Orsini who demonstrates with a precise analysis of single problems that the knowledge the Anglo-Saxon countries have of Croce is almost entirely limited to the books on esthetics he wrote in the first decades of this century. We must keep in mind however that in each country culture likes to take its own tortuous course toward truth and in doing so creates its own barriers and obstacles. The receptivity of cultural forms to other experiences and the willingness to discuss are favored by and often depend on particular circumstances that can in themselves be highly illuminating. It is obvious for example that the threat of Fascism that weighs on France has enlightened French

critics, doing more to enable them to appreciate recent forms of Italian culture than had all the laborious work of the translators and specialists, who presented their products to a public that until 1950 and perhaps even later was extremely disinterested.

In this sense we should say that Orsini's book, written in English and published in America, falls on fertile ground; first of all because the distance between two cultures cannot be measured in space but in psychological terms, and American culture is by nature, as Harry Levin so aptly put it in the vocabulary of the sociologist, pluralistic since it is the product of the contributions of different minorities. Above all, the conditions are favorable because the interest in literary criticism is great in America, certainly greater than in France. The continuous discussion on the theory of criticism makes Orsini's highly authoritative participation from within extremely propitious. I do not mean to say that this book will reach a large audience or be discussed and commented on by all the critics to whom it is addressed, as indeed it deserves to be. Whether or not the book appears in a paperback edition is beside the point. What I wish to state is the pertinence of the book for the central stream of the American critical discussion.

In the invitation to debate that we find implicit in every page of Orsini's book we detect an indisputable sign of his derivation from the ranks of contemporary Italian humanism, inspired by the militant idea that truth is debate and culture is above all dialogue. If we remember that according to Piero Gobetti's testimony (P. Gobetti: *Scritti Politici*, Torino 1960, p. 431) Giovanni Gentile proposed forty years ago to publish a book on William James in English to cure the Americans of Pragmatism, we will find in Orsini's modest and cordial undertaking the signs of a more civilized and less patronizing culture.

An analysis of the particulars of Orsini's book should take into account first of all his attitude toward the Anglo-Saxon cultural tradition and toward militant American criticism. In their relation to Croce's thought the one concurs while the other diverges in polemics. In treating the manifestation of these two orientations, Orsini accomplishes a noteworthy, and in many ways a positive, theoretical task. He begins with the parallel study of the Italian and English philosophical vocabulary in order to discover the point of convergence indispensable for an understanding of Croce's discourse. The word "intuition" for example commonly indicates in English

the immediate knowledge of a fact, sometimes knowledge of evident truths. But was this always the case? Orsini proves (pp. 81 ff) that it was defined in an 1891 text by John Dewey as knowledge of the "individual" in a manner not unlike that of Croce, and that Coleridge, who was not unacquainted with the Kantian term *Anschauung*, referred to it as the "immediate presentation of an object to the mind through the senses or the imagination." Hence Croce's use of the term is not contrary to the best in the Anglo-Saxon critical tradition.

The same can be said of the terms *fantasia* and *immaginazione*. In this case what has made the comprehension of Croce's discourse difficult must be attributed to an error on the part of the British translator of the *Aesthetics* — Douglas Ainslie. *Immaginazione* is not imagination in English mut "fancy," and *fantasia* should conversely be translated "imagination." With this established we can now say with no more possibility of misunderstanding that *fantasia* (imagination) is the creative faculty, synonymous with intuition, while *immaginazione* (fancy) is a pratical fact and thus excluded from theoretical activity. The author is not always so felicitous in finding the most pertinent examples in the Anglo-Saxon tradition with which to demonstrate his propositions. The idea expressed at the close of the sixteenth century by Sir Philip Sidney that "the poet nothing affirmes and therefore never lyeth," when taken out of its context in the late Aristotelian polemic on the contrast between poetic fiction and historical truth seems almost to be a text of Croce's. Brought back to its etymological signification however, its meaning is much more restricted than Croce's analogous assertion, and this evidence is hence more brilliant and paradoxical than convincing. But such forcing is actually very rare and Orsini knows Croce's language too well to indulge in distortions.

In studying the points in American criticism that diverge form Croce's thought, Orsini with opportune caution devotes himself primarily to the limitations of the man who contributed most to the diffusion of Croce's thought in America: J. E. Spingarn. In a series of essays, the most important of which appeared in 1910 under the title "The New Criticism," the American critic affirmed according to the canons of Croce's earliest esthetics that criticism as reproduction of the process of expression is "taste," while it was clear to Croce even as early as 1908 that the critic works when the artistic process is already completed and hence does not reproduce it but judges it. This tendency to ignore or to be unaware of Croce's concern

for the universality of judgment in criticism prompted, according to Orsini, the remonstrances of the New Humanists of the Irving Babbit school who, interpreting Croce through Spingarn, insisted that a follower of Croce could never make a judgment on a book but was forced to limit himself to expressing impressions.

But along with these misunderstandings, which could always be corrected by a more careful reading of Croce's work, there are other trends in American criticism that are irreconcilable with Croce's thought. The critic who from this point of view has the greatest intellectual prominence for Orsini is doubtless I. A. Richards. There are two contradictory tendencies in this critic, one which leads him toward Croce's position and the other which leads him away. On the one hand he gives evidence of having an exact awareness of the fact that the metaphor is not a rhetorical figure but the language of poetry itself, and that words do not exist by themselves as simple facts of vocabulary apart from the poet who forges them. On the other hand, he seems to be interested in the individual destinies of words within the work of art, in their contact with one another and the pressures they exert on one another. This critical atomism comes from the empiricism of Richards who does not believe in the unity of reality and hence in the "effable" quality of the individual affirmed by Croce. The so-called theory of "interinanimation," whose Bergsonian origins have been recalled by S. Ullman, is refuted by Orsini because it contradicts another of Richard's theories according to which the parts exist only in their relationship to the whole. As for the negation of the universality of human experience, Orsini wonders how the Richards that maintains this can then express an affirmative critical judgment on any author.

What does Orsini's book contribute to Croce criticism? Orsini has a decided talent for revealing his author's thoughts, stressing the successful moments but also noting the oscilations, the uncertainties and fallacies. In several places, in choosing between differing or uncertain positions he selects with coherence the one which seems to be most congenial with the development of Croce's thought. For example, how does Croce define words investigated by etymology? Are they "signs" which "stand for things or facts," as he seems to believe in a 1946 review of a book by the Italian scholar G. Nencioni, or are they expressions produced by intuition for esthetic enjoyment as he had on the contrary always affirmed before, and as he was to do again later in 1949? Orsini rightly chooses this second

solution. Similarly, what is the image for Croce? Is it a component along with emotion of that synthesis he calls esthetic form, or a synonym for the latter, as he occasionally seems to believe? If this second hypothesis were correct and image then became a tautological repetition of form, would it not be eliminated completely from practical criticism? This risk is so great that Orsini prefers to adhere to Croce's first position.

It is in the discussion of the terms "universality," "cosmic intuition" and "totality of artistic expression," all so central to the thought of the late Croce, that the dissension is the clearest and most eloquent. While if the concept of cosmic intuition enables Croce to understand Ariosto with his universal harmony and Don Quixote — the universal type of humanity perenially capable of creating and destroying his own illusions — it also introduces a terminology that tends to suffocate in the "universal" the vitality that is to be found in the artistic "particular." The definition of intuition as knowledge of the indistinction of the particular and the universal is not only an affirmative formula, as Orsini perceives it, but also a polemic stand against certain forms of art which do not achieve universality because they are suffocated by harsh emotion.

I would add that this attempt to liquidate all confessional literature from Rousseau and Proust (all thinkers who, as Croce wrote of Sartre, are subtle investigators of the soul but out of touch with history) represents a shift from the problems of esthetics, open to the most diverse forms of literature, to certain constants in Croce's personal taste. Since Croce conceives of the critic as a philosopher — *philosophus additus artifici* — it is natural from his point of view for a critic at a certain point in his career to shut himself up in the coordinates of his own taste and refuse to follow the artist's lead any longer. To achieve a criticism that is always eager to listen to and understand the newest literary forms, we must think of the critic not as a philosopher but as a talented mime, capable of driving his mimetic consciousness of art beyond the limits of his own historical taste. Even critics of this type have their regrets and their pet peeves however, and can express, as Spitzer did concerning Hemingway's direct discourse, objective interest in a form of art and at the same time esthetic repugnance for it. It is not surprising that the aging Croce, in a world that seemed to him to be wallowing once again in the troubled waters of romanticism, in an irrationalism that "seeming to come up out of the depths of hell, unfurls everywhere," should

think with tenderness of Arcadia as "an ancient refuge of true happiness," and repeat the words of the poet Mörike: "take me, old man, to your Rococo garden with its crowds of flowers perfumed still and shining with dew, fresh and aromatic."

[D.D.T.]

TWENTIETH CENTURY ITALIAN POETRY

This volume (Contemporary Italian Poetry, An Anthology, Edited by Carlo L. Golino. Foreword by Salvatore Quasimodo. University of California Press) is, as Salvatore Quasimodo writes in the foreword, "the first methodological presentation of its kind which has been attempted for the English-speaking reader," — an historically oriented bi-lingual anthology of twentieth century Italian poetry.

And it is a fine one. Editor Carlo Golino has gathered about him a corps of worthy and competent translators, who have been faithful throughout to the literality of the original texts, just as the editor himself, who has no small part in the translations, has for the most part faithfully represented the arc of literary history — the movements and trends — which has spanned Italian poetry for some fifty years. It is good to see not only the work of Montale, Ungaretti and Quasimodo — those three whose names and work are well-known to the English world by now — but selections as well from the works of Umberto Saba and Sandro Penna, in addition to some of the best of Aldo Palazzeschi's verbal experiments, minor though they are.

In fact, it is because Montale, Ungaretti and Quasimodo have been so extensively translated in American little magazines and journals throughout the post-war years, that I take particular pleasure in being able to focus on the works of some of the others, whose reputations have not attained such stature in the English-speaking world. For example, there is editor Golino's translation of a Penna poem:

> The little Venetian square
> mournful and ancient, gathers
> the fragrance of the sea. And flights
> of pigeons. But memory
> retains — bewitching
> the very light — the flying

young cyclist
turning to his friend: a melodious
whisper: "Going alone?"

which seems to me not only to capture the original brilliantly, but to illuminate Penna's method as one which moves away from the hermeticism which touches each of the grand triumvirate of Italian poetry, in its return to a more direct representation of human experience. Something of this is evident also in Saba's "Woman":

When you were a girl
you could sting
like the thorn of a wild blackberry.
Your foot, too, little savage,
you wielded as a weapon.

You were hard to take.

Now still young
you are still lovely, the threads
of years and sorrow bind together
our souls, and make them one. No longer
under the jet-black strands that my fingers
gather in do I fear
the little white faunlike keen-pointed ear.

where the final image, beautifully translated by Thomas Bergin, drives the poem not only out of the sentimental into the tremulously terrifying, but — from the point of view of history — from the Italian 19th century to the Italian 20th.

Montale, Ungaretti and Quasimodo are of course centerpoints of attention, with the latter being rendered hauntingly by Allen Mandelbaum. The editor's extensive introduction, tracing the development of each of them, especially with regard to the Hermetic movement, gives added illumination to the poems.

Two points about the anthology raise themselves as bones of contention. The first is one of consistency, the second of choice, in translating. Of the first, Mr. Golino (while offering such excellent translations as the Penna poem quoted above, as well as, say, of Montale's moving "Dora Markus" — the finest English translation of that poem I have read to date) sometimes chooses to translate the originally rhymed Italian poems into

English rhymes. When he does so, as in poems of Guido Gozzano, artificialities creep in, the language tends toward archaisms. When he translates a rhymed poem in loose form, as in the "Eighth Poem" of Papini, the effect is more honestly authentic.

The second point, I confess, is even more argumentative. The Futurists are represented by Govoni. Palazzeschi and Papini. But Govoni is tame as a kitten; Palazzeschi, despite the verbal experimentation, was a futurist in spirit rather than in technique; and Papini, who went into and out of the movement riding a religio-philosophical cockhorse, never really practiced what he only for a short time preached. I would have preferred, the touchiness of the fascist question aside, some representation of Marinetti's work, certainly "A Un Aviatore" — which was included in Selman Rodman's *100 Modern Poems*, the finest volume of world poetry published to date in this century. The marked contrast of his work would have helped not hindered the anthology, especially in the light of some recently published studies of the futurist movement which point to a resurgence of interest in Marinetti's techniques with line and image among the youngest of present-day Italian poets.

But apart from this, and giving, as one always must, the construction of an anthology the benefit of the ultimate subjectivity of its editor, this book finally opens the door wide for the entrance of Italian poetry into the world of international domain, an act begun when Quasimodo was awarded the Nobel Prize and one for which many of us have waited — and now not without reward.

[Jack A. Hirschman]

ALL PROVERBS ARE TRUE

As in many other countries in Europe, proverbs were particularly popular in Italy during the sixteenth century, thanks largely to the publication of the vast collection of the proverbs of classical antiquity, which Erasmus had gathered under the title *Adagiorum Collectanea.* This most significant work, which was published in the year 1500, went rapidly through several editions, and in 1550 was also translated into Italian. But, of course, proverbs and maxims had been collected and held in high esteem before the epoch-making work of

Erasmus, not only in Latin, the language of the humanists, but also in the various vernaculars of Europe: indeed, since, after all, proverbs are the wisdom of the humbler classes of society, it is not surprising that many of the older collections of Italian proverbs have come down to us, completely or in part, in the everyday language of the compiler.

Among the earliest collections of adages printed in Italy in the sixteenth century was a group of about 150 proverbs in Venetian dialect which was published in 1509 with the title *Dieci Tavole*, and which, because of its popularity, was reprinted and enlarged several times in the following decades. If we bear in mind the long lineage of the proverbs of the Veneto (which includes not only the city of Venice, but also the region adjacent to it), we should not be surprised by the fact that one of her living sons and admirers, G. A. Cibotto, should have recently published a selection of 915 of her sayings: *Proverbi del Veneto* (Milan, Aldo Martello). These bits of wisdom are presented in a truly elegant volume, which is accompanied by twenty-four woodcuts illustrating proverbs and games. Two of the woodcuts, or to be more exact emblems, are reproduced in full color on the elegant jacket. Incidentally, a few of the emblems are by the eigteenth-century Bolognese artist Giuseppe Antonio Mitelli, who illustrated many proverbs for a collection which is very hard to come by.

Cibotto, who is fully aware of the fact that not all Italians understand the Venetian dialect, first gives the Venetian text of each proverb, and then his own Italian translation. He makes no effort to give the Tuscan-Italian parallel of a single item. Following a tradition which in Italy became popular with Giusti's well-known collection of Tuscan proverbs, but which actually goes back to the first large collection of Italian proverbs published in Italy (the first large collection of Italian proverbs was published in England by John Florio in 1591) by Orlando Pescetti in 1598, Cibotto has grouped his adages into chapters or "families": Love-Woman-Matrimony; Animals; Religion-Priests-Devotion; Poverty-Wealth, etc. This, of course, makes the reading of the book more pleasant by far than the simple, monotonous, alphabetical arrangement.

The collection of proverbs is preceded by an introduction, which is appropriately brief, but informative and like the collection itself is aimed at the general reader rather than at the specialist. Cibotto makes a general survey of the most important collections of Venetian proverbs through the centuries, down to the classic volume by Cristoforo Pasqualigo,

who was writing during a period of great activity in all branches of folklore — end of the nineteenth century — and who amassed no less than 5,000 proverbs. It seems, however, that Pasqualigo's work includes many items which were translated into Venetian from Giusti's large collection.

Cibotto is well aware of the fact that today the general interest in paremiology is at a rather low ebb. but, rightly, he believes that the wisdom of everyday life distilled into the form of adages can still be fascinating and useful. After all, proverbs have a great deal in common with the epigram, and in spite of the old Italian maxims "Consigliati coi proverbi" (Take counsel with proverbs) and "Tutti i proverbi sono provati" (Experience shows that all proverbs are true), there is no doubt that the intent of many is diversion through wit. Cibotto has made a point of choosing the more amusing of the Venetian proverbs, and he is of the opinion that Venetians, "the Englishmen of Italy," have always enjoyed an especially keen sense of humor, more so than even the Florentines. But even in a collection like the present one there are proverbs for all occasions and tastes, for truly amusing proverbs are decidedly in the minority. As Pasqualigo said: "Proverbs, most of the time, are concerned with what is most constant in the needs and paths of life, and are the legacy of the people." In most cases proverbs go beyond the mask of conventionality of daily human intercourse, and help penetrate the innermost recesses of the soul of a people and mirror its multifarious facets

Cibotto has excerpted his proverbs from the various collections at his disposal, and added a few from oral tradition. He claims that he has tried to select those sayings that seemed to him to be typically Venetian. I am afraid, however, that he — and how could he help it? — has fallen into the same trap as Pasqualigo, for even a rapid reading of the text indicates that therein are many proverbs which do not belong to any one region of Italy, but have become, through the centuries, common property. In keeping with the book under review, this review is not aimed at the specialist, and I shall therefore call attention to only two such proverbs: in Cibotto's collection we find "Chi va in leto senza çena, tuta la note se remena" (He who goes to bed without supper, tosses the whole night long), and "Va cavra zota fin ch'el lovo no la intopa" (The lame goat keeps going until it comes across the wolf). I fail to see anything especially Venetian about them, all the more since we find them in good Tuscan form way back in the

fourteenth century: the former in the *Decameron*, the latter in one of Sacchetti's *Novelle*.

For the benefit of the reader who may not have the opportunity to browse through *Proverbi del Veneto*, I have culled and translated a few from the Venetian with a further effort — but not a controlled one — to select the more typical ones.

Né dona senza amor, né vecio senza dolor (There is neither a woman without love, nor an old man without aches); Amor no fa bogere la pignata (Love does not make the pot boil); La puta che va a l'altar co la so inoçenza, fin i albori ghe fa riverenza (When a young woman goes to the altar with her innocence, even trees bow to her); Dove ghe xe tose inamorae, xe inutile tegnir porte serae (Where there are girls in love, it is useless to lock the doors); Xe più difiçile far la guardia a 'na femena, ch'a un saco de pulesi (It is more difficult to watch over a woman, than a sackful of fleas); Se tuti i bechi portasse un lampion, che gran iluminazion (If all cuckolds carried lanterns we would have a grand illumination); Ogni femena è casta, se non l'ha chi la cazza (Every woman is chaste, if no one chases her); Caval, putana e persegar, trent'ani no i pol durar (Horses, whores and peach trees do not last thirty years); El cafè l'è bon con tre s: sentà, scotando e scrocando (Coffee is good with three s's: sitting down, when it is scorching hot, and given free); Vino novo braghe leste (New wine requires quickly lowered pants); Cafè de colo e ciocolata de culo (Coffee from the top of the pot, and chocolate from the bottom); Polenta nova e osei de riva, vin de grota e zente viva (Polenta made with new flour and migratory birds, cool wine and gay people); L'inverno l'è 'l boia dei veci, el purgatorio dei puteleti e l'inferno dei poareti (Winter is the hangman of old people, the purgatory of children, and the hell of the poor); Co la fame vien dentro da la porta, l'amor va fora per i balconi (When hunger comes in through the door, love exits through the window); Tre cosse ghe vol per farse siori: o robar, o trovar, o ereditar (Three things are needed to become rich: either steal, or find, or inherit); La colpa l'è na bela putela, ma gnessun la vol (Guilt is a beautiful girl, but no one wants her); Chi tropo se inchina, mostra 'l culo (He who stoops too low, shows his behind); I difeti xe come i odori: li sente più chi xe atorno che chi li porta (Defects are like perfumes: those who are around are more aware of them than those who wear them).

[C. S.]

OF TIME AND THE SYREN

The cover of the Italian edition of *Il Gattopardo* has become as famous as the novel itself. It portrays the figure of Prince Don Fabrizio Salina slightly bending forward in front of a row of servants bowing to him as he passes by. Everything is immersed in an intense yellow background tempered by warm brown touches.

On the cover of the new book by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *Racconti* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1961), the head of the Prince has become that of the Author, everything around has been removed, and the high forehead and the sharp nose, enlightened by a pinkish, soft colour, dominate the title which is sunk in a contrasting dark.

Albe Steiner, to whom we owe the two covers, has thus, with poetic intuition, captured the essence of the two books: in focusing the attention of our eyes on the absorbed, somehow enigmatic features of Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, Steiner has underlined the main characteristic and *raison d'être* of these *Racconti*. Ironically enough, the title is not appropriate to the content of the volume, or it is at least incomplete. In fact, only two of the writings are properly "short-stories" (*i. e.*, the sketch "La gioia e la legge" and, especially, "Lighea"), while the first one ("Il mattino di un mezzadro") is the initial chapter of the novel *I gattini ciechi* that Tomasi di Lampedusa began after *Il Gattopardo* but never finished, and the last one ("I luoghi della mia prima infanzia") is a collection of autobiographical pages.

In introducing the volume, Giorgio Bassani speaks of the Author's "basic unity of inspiration." This statement seems acceptable. The inspiration has unity because it is centered on a Sicilian world that is recalled through a process of memory reminiscent more of Proust than of Stendhal.

In "Il mattino di un mezzadro" we find the descendants of the major characters of *Il Gattopardo*. from the Ibbas, the *nouveaux riches* so much worse than the Sedaras, to Don Fabrizietto, the pitiful nephew of the "Principone" Don Fabrizio. Time passes and destroys everything, the descendants aren't but the shades of their great predecessors — great even in their greediness, like the Sedaras.

Time, the decadent, corroding Muse of the Author, is also the subtle counterpoint of "I luoghi della mia prima infanzia," in which, through a lucid, intense, loving effort, he re-creates all what was dear to him during his childhood:

persons, landscapes, objects, but mainly the two houses, one in Palermo and the other out in the country at Santa Margherita Belice. Both were destroyed, the one in Palermo by bombs "dragged from beyond the Atlantic" on April 5. 1943, and the other, from which the Donnafugata of *Il Gattopardo* was derived, by time and disuse — a bit like Nievo's castle of Fratta. Tomasi di Lampedusa describes in detail the *milieu* of his childhood, in obedience to what he jokingly calls a duty that should be "enforced by the State," since "there are no memoires, although written by insignificant characters, that do not contain first-rate social and picturesque values... Can you imagine what the diary of a Parisian bawd of the *Régence* or the memoires of Byron's servant during the Venetian epoch would be like?" Actually he writes because, unlike Stendhal, whose childhood was a time of "tyranny and prepotence," to him "childhood is a lost paradise." So, with intense love, he makes an inventory of his lost paradise — as Piero Calamandrei had written his *Inventario della casa di campagna.*

"Social and picturesque values" are to be found in great number in these pages: a feudal Sicily with its "beautiful and terribly sad landscape" is revived for us with the vividness of a nightmare, if such a strong word does not conflict too sharply with the graceful, learned, almost 18th century-like world to which it refers. Just as an example, see the description of the library in the country house, where the Author's ancestors had collected many works of the Enlightenment period: "the *Encyclopédie*, Fontenelle, Helvetius, Voltaire... a bizarre library, if one thinks that it had been set up by that Prince Niccolò who was a reactionary"; but there were also *Victoires et Conquêtes*, satirical journals of the "Risorgimento," *Don Quixote*, La Fontaine, Zola, and *I Malavoglia* "with an autographic inscription." The scholars who want to explore the sources of Tomasi di Lampedusa's culture, the deep roots of his inner world, certainly have immense material here.

Among the best parts of the autobiographical pages are undoubtedly the chapters on "the trip" from Palermo to Santa Margherita Belice (preparation to the analogous trip to Donnafugata in the second chapter of *Il Gattopardo*) and on the country house. See how the Author describes the *carabinieri* who accompany his family for protection but even more as a sign of the social importance of the Princes ("on horseback, with their napes protected by white handkerchiefs like Fattori's horsemen"), or the courtyard with a Baroque staircase

that, in its complicated structure, has "the atmosphere of a quarrel between lovers".

Let's finally deal with "Lighea," the only short-story of the volume. The setting is at the beginning a *caffè* in Turin, "a sort of *Ades* inhabited by pale shadows of retired lieutenant colonels, magistrates and professors," and at the end a small bay near Augusta, Sicily ("...In front of me I found the pure expanse of the sea, and in the background the Etna, no longer ruthless, wrapped in the mormoning mists. The harbour was completely deserted... The little house, in its ramshakle rooms, contained all in all the sofa on which I had spent the night, a table and three chairs: in the kitchen some pottery pans and an old lamp. Behind the house, a fig-tree and a well. A paradise").

Lighea is a name presumably derived from the ancient Greek λιγός, λιγεῖα, λιγύ (adj., that resounds clearly, highly; clear, easy to hear: said, for instance, of the wind): in fact, Lighea, the Syren "daughter of Calliope," besides having a smile that expressed "an almost beastly joy of living, an almost divine gladness," besides having "a magic smell of sea," had a beautiful voice, "a bit guttural, veiled. resounding with innumerable harmonies; in it, as a background to the words, one could hear the lazy surfs of the Summer seas, the rustle of the last foams on the beach, the passing of winds on lunar waves."

Rosario La Ciura, Senator and "Great Humanist," fell in love with her while, as a young man, he was studying ancient Greek on a row-boat in the splendid Sicilian sea (Lighea spoke ancient Greek to him). He tells the story of his love to the young Paolo Corbèra, the day before leaving for his last voyage aboard the *Rex*: "...I will not refuse this sort of pagan Grace that was granted to me."

The story, as artificial as its root may be, is beautifully written, and contains the main motifs that Tomasi di Lampedusa had expressed in *Il Gattopardo*: the "eternal Sicily, that of the things of nature," irony, sensuality, above all Time and a supreme detachment, since everything will end in Death. Lighea is indeed the personified image of this longing for an immortal wholeness, for a lost paradise. She says, "I am everything because I am only a stream of life without accidents; I am immortal because all the deaths are conveyed into me..." The story ends with the image of some books that "are rotting slowly," as *Il Gattopardo* ends with an image of "livid dust."

[G. P. B.]

Items

THE SOCIETY FOR Italian Historical Studies, an affiliate of the American Historical Association, again offers a prize of $200 for the best unpublished study in the history of Italy, of article or essay length. Since the award is to invite and encourage fresh interest in Italian history the prize is offered for a first or second study in the field. The deadline for submitting articles is July 1, 1962. Details are available from Mr. H. Stuart Hughes, 413 Boylston, Harvard University, Cambridge 38, Massachusetts. In 1962 the Society will also confer a Citation for Distinguished Achievement on an American historian of established reputation who during the year preceding July 1, 1962 has made a contribution to the history of Italy considered by the Society to be deserving of such recognition.

THE MARZOCCO PRIZES for 1961 were awarded to the historian Luigi Salvatorelli for his studies on the "Risorgimento," to the writer Gianna Manzini and to the playwright Ugo Betti.

THE "FONDAZIONE CINI" sponsored an International Congress on Pirandello during October, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of his death. The Congress was held on the Island of S. Giorgio, Venice, home of the Foundation. On the opening day the "Piccolo Teatro della Città di Milano" staged *Enrico V* at the theatre "La Fenice." All the major Italian theatrical companies joined the celebration by staging his plays, from *Liolà* to *Ciascuno a suo modo*, from *Questa sera si recita a soggetto* to *Pensaci Giacomino*.

THE LIBRARIES OF Brown University, Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania and the Newberry Library have agreed to prepare a short-title catalogue of books printed in Italy and of books in Italian printed abroad during the sixteenth century. The purpose of the catalogue is to list holdings of such books in the libraries of the United States and Canada. When published, it will be similar in style to the British Museum's *Short-Title of Books Printed in Italy*...

(London, 1958). This publication will be of prime importance to the research activities of scholars and a useful tool for interlibrary loans. Libraries interested in participating in this co-operative project are invited to indicate their interest to the editor-in-chief, Dr. Robert Marshall, Professor of Romance Languages, Wells College, Aurora, New York.

ST. LOUIS UNIVERSITY and Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass., have initiated a cooperative project for filming the Hebrew manuscripts of the Vatican Library.

THE LAST QUARTER has brought forth in America and England the usual rich variety of books on Italian matters. In history: Gino Luzzatto, *An Economic History of Italy, from the Fall of the Roman Empire to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, translated by Philip Jones (Barnes and Noble: New York); Peter de Polnay, *Garibaldi: The Man and the Legend* (Thomas Nelson & Sons: New York); E. E. Y. Hales, *Pio Nono: Study in Politics and Religion in the Nineteenth Century* (Doubleday Image Books: New York). In philosophy and science: A translation by Thomas Salusbury of Galileo's *Discourse on Bodies in Water*, with introduction and notes by Stillman Drake (Illinois UP: Urbana); a translation by H. S. Harris of Giovanni Gentile's *Genesis and Structure of Society* (Illinois UP: Urbana). In literary history: Ernest Hatch Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch* (University of Chicago Press); K. H. Hartley, *Bandello and the Heptaméron* (Cambridge University Press); Robert J. Clements, *Michelangelo's Theory of Art* (New York University Press). In current fiction: Ugo Pirro, *A Thousand Betrayals* (Simon & Schuster, as a Trident Press Book: New York); Mario Pomilio, *The New Line* (Harper: New York); Indro Montanelli, *General Della Rovere* (Doubleday: Garden City). In art: Gertrude Coor, *Neroccio De' Landi, 1447-1500* (Princeton University); Ernest De Wald, *Italian Painting, 1200-1600* (Holt, Rinehart, & Winston: New York); Maurice H. Goldblatt, *Leonardo da Vinci: A Newly Identified Head of Leda* (The Citadel Press: New York); Stanley Mayes, *The Great Belzoni, Archeologist Extraordinary*, a biography of Giovanni Battista Belzoni, 1778-1823 (Walker: New York); Costantino Baroni, *All the Paintings of Leonardo da Vinci* (Hawthorn Books: New York); Giorgio Vasari, *Vasari on Technique*, a reprint,

(Dover: New York). On travel: Harold Keller, *Umbria, The Heart of Italy* (The Viking Press: New York); Robert M. Coates, *Beyond the Alps, A Summer in the Italian Hill Towns* (William Sloane Associates: New York); Carlo Levi, *The Linden Trees*, (Knopf: New York); Georgina Masson, *Italian Gardens*, (Abrams: New York). A new Italian-English dictionary: *Langenscheidts's Universal Dictionary* (Barnes and Noble: New York).

THE "PRIMAVERA," A statue by Pietro Francovilla, has been standing headless on the reconstructed bridge of Santa Trinita in Florence for 17 years (since August 3, 1944, when the retreating Germans blew up the bridge). Last October the head was found by Timoteo Lucaroni, a worker who was digging in the bed of the Arno River for the "Autostrada del Sole." The head was placed on public display in the Michelozzo courtyard of Palazzo Vecchio, before being returned to its rightful owner, "Primavera."

ALFIO RUSSO HAS recently replaced Mario Missiroli in the editorship of *Il Corriere della Sera*, the leading Milanese newspaper, and one of Italy's best known dailies.

ON OCTOBER 14 and 15 the body of Gaetano Salvemini was transferred from Sorrento to Florence, where his friends who shared his anti-fascist ideals honored him with a simple ceremony. Salvemini is now buried in the Trespiano cemetary, near the tomb of Piero Calamandrei.

A SUCCESSFUL PREMIERE of *Il Visconte dimezzato* was held in November at the Opera of Montecarlo. The libretto for the light opera by Bruno Gillet was written by Italo Calvino, who derived it from his novel. The opera won the prize "Ranieri III di Monaco".

THE FIRST COMPLETE edition of *L'Inferno* on records was issued late in November (six 33 1/3 l.p. records, with a presentation by Natalino Sapegno). Dante's lines are read by leading Italian actors: Giorgio Albertazzi, Carlo D'Angelo, Arnoldo Foà and Achille Millo. The recording of the *Divina Commedia* will be completed by 1962.

ON NOVEMBER 30 the Paris newspaper *Le Monde* published an interview with Enrico Mattei, the President of ENI (Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi), in which he stated that "poverty is not Italy's

destiny. Italians are no longer poor. You have to face it... We want to make up for lost time." To a question about the deal ENI made with Russia to buy Russian oil, Mattei replied, "We bought it just because the price was convenient. I buy everywhere, provided the prices are low. After all, Russians offer a large market to our industry. In exchange for their oil, they import our synthetic rubber, pipes and drilling equipment. I have to make Italian industry work — I am Italian, don't forget it." Alain Murcier, *Le Monde's* journalist, concluded that Mattei is so powerful because he has been able to get his government's support without giving it a corresponding control over his enterprise. "His main support comes from a public to whom he sells gasoline and shares, but above all sound ideas... Italians no longer want to pick up just the crumbs, no longer want to be the "poor relatives"...". It is interesting to note that Premier Fanfani, in a speech he later gave in Milan, congratulated Mattei for his contribution to Italian industry in the world and officially upheld his activities.

AN EXIBITION OF Giovanni Battista Piranesi's etchings was opened in Turin on December 1, 1961. It was the first time the Venetian artist's works were shown in such a complete exhibition in Italy.

BOOKS OF GENERAL interest published recently in Italy include the following: *Testimonianze Americane sul Risorgimento*, edited by Elizabeth Mann-Borgese (Edizioni di Comunità: Milan); Renzo De Felice, *Storia degli Ebrei in Italia durante il Fascismo* (Einaudi: Turin); Silvio D'Amico, *Le finestre di Piazza Navona* (Mondadori: Milan); Enrico Emanuelli, *Settimana Nera* (Mondadori: Milan); Carlo Cassola, *Un cuore arido* (Einaudi: Turin); Corrado Alvaro, *Tutto è accaduto* (Bompiani: Milan); Giorgio Pullini, *Il romanzo italiano del dopoguerra* (Schwartz: Milan); Rosario Villari, *Il Sud nella Storia d'Italia* (Laterza: Bari); *Lettere sul Risorgimento*, selected by Giosuè Carducci, edited by Giovanni Spadolini (Zanichelli: Bologna); *Narratori dell'Ottocento e del primo Novecento*, edited by Aldo Borlenghi, the anthology will consist of 5 volumes, the first one includes writings by Guerrazzi, Rovani, Pelosini, Procacci, Praga, the two Boitos, Tarchetti (Ricciardi: Milan-Naples); *Scrittori della realtà dall'VIII al XIX secolo*, edited by Pier Paolo Pasolini and A. Bertolucci, with

a preface by A. Moravia (Garzanti: Milan); *Il Fascismo*, an anthology of critical writings edited by Costanzo Casucci (Il Mulino: Bologna); Baldo Curato, *Introduzione al Boccaccio* (Padus: Cremona); Ugo Foscolo, *Esperimenti di traduzione dell'Iliade*, edited critically by Gennaro Barberisi, Vol. I (Le Monnier: Florence).

THE MATHEMATICIAN Francesco Severi died in Rome at the age of 82 on December 8. Founder of the "Italian Institute of Higher Mathematics," member of the Italian "Accademia dei Lincei," in 1957 he took the place that Einstein had left at the "Institut de France." His attitude toward science can be summarized in his famous saying: "You walk by foot; you need wings in order to fly." Creative imagination, *fantasia*, was his secret; once he said, "I never use numbers, I leave them to the computers."

THE "ISTITUTO CENTRALE di Statistica" gives the following data on the school situation of Italian children: out of 6,515,432 children between the ages of 6 and 14, 5,735,458 are students in grade schools or junior high (88%); 779,974 (12%) are therefore not attending school. These figures can be further analyzed as follows: 97.4% of the population up to 10 attends school, only 90.4% of the population from 10 to 12 attends school, and only 68.8% of the population between 12 and 14 attends school. The percentage of non-attendance varies according to social positions: it ranges from 19.3% of those children whose families are in agriculture to 1.8% of those whose parents are employers, professional people, or managers.

THE OPERA SEASON at *La Scala* was inaugurated on December 7 with Verdi's *La battaglia di Legnano*, an opera that concluded the celebrations for the Centennial year of the Italian Unity. Other operas scheduled at *La Scala* and *La piccola Scala* for the current season include: Vivaldi's *La fida Ninfa*, Haendel's *Serse*, Gluck's *Orpheus and Euridice*, Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Cherubini's *Medea* (starring Maria Callas), Rossini's *L'occasione fa il ladro*, Bellini's *La sonnambula*, Donizetti's *Il campanello dello speziale* and *La favorita*. Verdi's *Rigoletto* and *Falstaff*, Wagner's *I Maestri Cantori di Norimberga*, Gounod's *Faust*, Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande*, Puccini's *Il Tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, *Gianni Schicchi* and *Turandot*, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. The program also

includes six ballets and the following "prime rappresentazioni:" Busoni's *Turandot*, De Falla's *Atlantide* (completed by Ernest Holffter), Dallapiccola's *Il prigioniero*, Turchi's *Il buon soldato Sveijk*, Castigioni's *Alice nel paese delle meraviglie*, and Stravinsky's *Renard*.

A GENERAL CENSUS of the Italian population was taken during the month of October. Its results are not yet known completely, but preliminary results show a total population of 50,463,762, an increase of 2,948,225 (6.2%) over the 1951 figure.

"FREEDOM VERSUS CONSTRAINT in the Creation of the Kingdom of Italy — a Centennial Reappraisal" was discussed in a joint session with the Society for Italian Historical Studies, of which R. John Rath, of the University of Texas, was chairman. Paul Schroeder, of Concordia Senior College, presented a paper on "Austria as an Obstacle to Italian Unification and Freedom, 1814-1861." A. William Salomone, of New York University, discussed "Risorgimento and Reconstruction: The Risorgimento between Ideology and History." The meeting was held December 30, 1961, in Washington, D.C.

RECENT ARTICLES OF interest in Italian publications include the following: On the historian Walter Maturi, see E. Sestan, *Walter Maturi*, in "Rivista Storica Italiana," No. 2, 1961 (Ed. Scientifiche Italiane: Naples); G. Mastroianni, *I princìpi del Croce* and U. Cerroni, *La filosofia politica di G. Gentile*, also in "Rivista Storica Italiana," No. 2, 1961; S. C. Landucci, *Per lo studio del pensiero politico di F. De Sanctis* in "Società," No. 3, (XVIII) 1961 (Parenti: Milan); the whole November issue of "Il Ponte" was dedicated to "Censura e spettacolo in Italia," notable among the essays are Norberto Bobbio, *Il metodo della libertà*, Paolo Barile, *La censura in Italia dagli inizi del secolo al dopoguerra*, and an interesting "Inchiesta su censura e spettacolo in Italia. 68 risposte a un nostro questionario;" a special issue of the economic review "24 Ore" analyzes the "Italian miracle" that repeated itself in 1961; the whole 4th issue of "Menabò" (1961), the review edited by Vittorini and Calvino, deals with the relations between literature and the workers' world; *Leggere*, the monthly review edited by the catholic Gino Montesanto, dedicates the December 1961 issue to the problems of the Italian school: writings by Mario Gozzini, Margherita Guidacci, Nicola Pistelli and Adolfo Oxilia; a sociological

essay by Riccardo Musatti on the relation between the city and the country in modern times is to be found in the last issue (1961) of *Nord-Sud*.

LUIGI EINAUDI. THE former President of the Italian Republic, died on October 30 at the age of 87. Author of *Cronache economiche e politiche di un trentennio, Il buon governo, Prediche, Lo Scrittoio del Presidente, Prediche Inutili*, among many other works, Luigi Einaudi was one of the most famed professors of economics. He became a senator at only 45, he became Governor of the Bank of Italy in 1945 and Minister for the Budget in 1946: in these positions he was able to stabilize the "lira." In 1948 he was elected to the Presidency of the Italian Republic. After his death, the leading economist, Libero Lenti, in *Il Corriere della Sera* of October 31, 1961, wrote: "In him, who was so ready to grasp the real meaning of things, away from any form of rhetoric, Italians saw all those virtues that are the antithesis of their traditional defects." Among these virtues, his modesty, honesty, and moral sense of the political life stand out clearly.

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